"Congress shall make no law..."

The Valley Patriot

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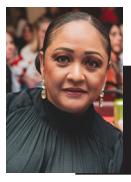
Abuse of Power

Corrupt Haverhill officials continue to use government bodies to retaliate against a political opponent, doing so out in the open knowing they will never pay a price for their lawless behavior.

PAGE 5

Haverhill School Committeeman Paul Magliocchetti

INDEX

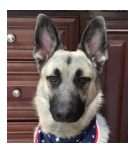


Rep. Reyes
PAGE 8

Vets.....1,3,13,26
Editorial/Salisbury.....2
National.....2,6,13,18
Lawrence.....3,4,7-9,11,15,20
Haverhill.....4,5,7,14,25
Methuen.....4,5,7,8,10,14,15
State.....4,6,8
North Andover.....6,14
BASH AWARDS 7
Lowell/Georgetown.....7,13,14
Dracut.....9,16
BASH SCHOLARSHIPS 14
Local Charities (Katie Cook).....16
BASH Notebook.....20-21
Real Estate 24
Religion.....27

Francisco Paulino
State Rep.
PAGES 8,15

Auditor DiZoglio
In Your Corner
PAGE 6



Kane
PAGE 13

Bill Cushing
TV TALK
PAGE 27

Valley Patriot of the Month

US Marine, Police Officer, Veteran's Advocate; Eric Ryan

John Cuddy
VETERAN COLUMNIST

The 2024 John Ratka Hero Veteran Award recipient, Haverhill's Eric Ryan graduated from Haverhill High School in 1988. While growing up in the city with his brother, he was greatly influenced by his two grandfathers, both World War II Veterans. One, left Norwich University during his sophomore year, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. His grandfather joined the US Army and served in World War II as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne at the Battle of the Bulge. His grandfather used to joke that it "took him eight years to finish Norwich University." It wasn't until much later in his life that his grandfather elaborated on his statement about college. His other grandfather served in the US Army in North Africa and the Philippine Islands, (then legally part of the United States, but occupied by Japan) during the war. Both grandfathers instilled in Eric understanding and compassion for all people. Because without this mind set, you cannot help others, and most importantly you cannot understand or appreciate their struggles.

Eric reflected on many of his stories as a young man and his grandfathers' impact on him. Citing one story working with his grandfather, "Papa Ryan," who taught him how to do a brake job on a car at the age of nine. Eric watched his grandfather intently work on the car and listened to everything he was told, including, why you need to fix brakes, and how the entire braking system worked. At the end of this "seminar," his grandfather asked him several times about how the system worked and why it operated in this way. Eric answered the questions correctly, and to his surprise was told by his grandfather "now put it back together and let us be done with this job." Eric says he was "nervous and overwhelmed by my realization that I was now going to do this on his own." Eric began the process of reassembling the braking system. After everything was done, it was inspected by his grandparent, and a few things were tightened up by "Papa Ryan." The job

was a success. Eric was able to put the new brakes on, checkedwhat needed to be checked and completed the job. He thinks he was successful, most likely with a little additional guidance at the time from his beloved grandparent. Quoting Eric, "I learned so much more than I could ever imagine and have gone back to this story several times in my life. Because what I had learned was not how to change brakes on a car, it was to have confidence in myself to problem solve and to continuously learn and adapt to situations throughout my life with

HERO: PAGE 26

Free Gaza From Hamas!

In the 1930's we didn't call public gatherings or parades of Nazis "Pro-Germany protests."

That's because the news media and both political parties back then understood that using neutral language to describe genocidal maniacs only helps to further the goals of those maniacs.

Today, however, the news media and at least one political party purposely calls modern day Nazis "pro-Palestinian protests" as they march through the streets of this country chanting "gas the Jews" and harass and intimidate Jwish college students with threats of violence and anti-semitic tropes.

The events of the last few months on college campuses and in America's inner cities have made it obvious that today's "reimagined" Nazis have infiltrated the faculties and student bodies of college campuses all over the country.

And the fact that our news media calls them "pro-Palestinian protests" today instead of "genocidal Nazi Jew haters" shows

only have the support of anti-American traitors who have infiltrated the faculties of colleges but also our once credible and competent news media.

Muslim terrorists and anti-American agitators have For decades, these enemeis of freedom have had free reign over the minds of young college kids striving for an educaiton, but instead being conditioned to hate America, our freedoms, our history, customs, and system of government.

And for decades, whenever anyone complained about the enemies among us the media and a certain

Biden's New Trojan Horse

Ted Xenakis
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Unless you are drunk on liberal Kool-Aide, you know America has a crisis at our southern border. For reasons that are all too apparent to any thinking person, Joe Biden is changing the demographics in America like no other time in our nation's history. He's a one-man wrecking crew whose open-door policy should prompt articles of impeachment as it goes well beyond simple malfeasance.

However, what you may not know is that Biden has nuclearized a law that's been on the books for decades. It's known as Immigration Parole and was first created in 1956 when President Eisenhower wanted to allow 30,000 Hungarians to enter the country after that nation's unsuccessful revolt against the Soviet Union.

This law has gone through various iterations over the decades since 1956, with the latest being the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) passed in 1996, which amended parole to be determined "only on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit."

As the law states, use of parole immigration was intended to be on a case-by-case basis, and only for urgent humanitarian reasons or for significant public benefit. One would think that these criteria would result in only a modest amount of paroles granted each year.

In fact, under both the Obama and Trump administrations, that is exactly how these paroles were awarded. According to Senator Lindsay Graham, both Obama and Trump issued an annual average of 5,623 paroles to migrants.

According to Senator Graham, "In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, President Biden paroled 795,561 migrants. In FY 2023 he has already paroled 802,764 migrants and that total does not include the 4th quarter. It is likely the Biden Administration will have paroled approximately 1.2 million migrants in FY 2023 when final figures are available."

Does that sound like a case-by-case basis? Can there be that many urgent humanitarian or significant public benefit reasons? Bear in mind that these paroles are in addition to migrants who seek asylum in America or are otherwise refugees.

According to the American Immigration Council, "The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to exercise discretion to temporarily allow certain noncitizens to physically enter or remain in the United States if they are applying for admission but do not have a legal basis for being admitted.

DHS may only grant parole if the agency determines that there are urgent humanitarian or significant public benefit reasons for a person to be in the United States, and that person merits a favorable exercise of discretion. Grants of parole are made for limited periods of time, often to accomplish a discrete purpose, and individuals are typically expected to depart the United States when the authorized period expires unless another form of status or relief is conferred.

While individuals who receive a grant of parole are allowed to enter the United States, they are not provided with an immigration status, nor are they formally "admitted" into the country for purposes of immigration law. An admission occurs when an immigration officer allows a noncitizen to enter the United States pursuant to a visa or another entry document, without the limitation of parole. The distinction between an admission and parole is a significant one under immigration law."

Clearly, under Biden and his impeached DHS Secretary, the Immigration Parole law is being subverted to afford just another illegal means to flood America with illegal immigrants. Does anyone really believe that the government is keeping track of these folks after they dissolve into the American landscape?

This November, America will be at a crossroads that it hasn't faced in well over a century. Donald Trump promises complete shutdown of the border, destruction of the cartels and massive deportations.

He may not be able to achieve these goals, but he is at least making his case for putting an end to Biden's insanity. ◊

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Senate Passes Three Consumer Protection Bills

Pavel Payano
STATE SENATOR, 1ST ESSEX DISTRICT

This month, the Massachusetts Senate passed three important consumer protection bills aimed at safeguarding our community members from unfair practices across several sectors.

The passage of S.2738 is a milestone in curbing the deceptive practices of third-party electric suppliers. This legislation prevents these entities from enrolling new residential customers, protecting our constituents from overpriced and misleading contracts that have historically drained millions from Massachusetts households.

In addition, S.2737 addresses a lesser known but significant issue: home heating oil spills. This bill mandates insurance coverage for homeowners for the cleanup of such spills, safeguarding them from the potentially devastating financial consequences of environmental cleanup, which can cost upwards of $100,000.

Furthermore, S.2736 modernizes consumer protections within the automobile market. This bill enhances legal safeguards for those purchasing or leasing used cars, ensuring that our residents can engage in these transactions with increased confidence and security.

These legislative advancements underscore our ongoing efforts to protect the rights and interests of all Massachusetts residents. They reflect a broader commitment to fostering a state where fairness, security, and transparency are not just expected but guaranteed.

In addition to our legislative achievements, we are actively addressing ongoing issues. From healthcare to transportation, we are engaging with community members and local leaders to understand and resolve these concerns. These discussions are vital in shaping our legislative priorities and ensuring that our actions reflect the real needs of our communities.

Looking forward, there is much work to be done, but I am confident in our ability to meet these challenges with proactive and thoughtful legislation. Our continued efforts will focus on creating a more equitable and just environment for all our residents. ◊

VETERANS OFFICE

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
ANNUAL FLAG REPLACEMENT
A STUDENT-LED EVENT
HEAVENLY DONUTS
SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024
Every year around Memorial Day, we replace flags on graves of all those veterans who are interred in the city of Methuen. This is both a fun day and a way to do something important and worthwhile for the community!
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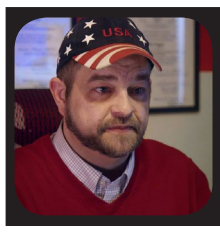
North Andover Turbocharges Overpopulating the Town



Paying Attention!

with Tom Duggan

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has enacted a new law called the MBTA Community Act.

This act strong arms local communities to build multi-family housing units by overriding zoning requirements (that is, allowing "as of right" construction); not requiring construction of affordable units; bypassing elements of local Town Meetings; and other local requirements.

In essence, the state is now determining how, when, and where local communities grow as opposed to the communities determining this for themselves.

To comply with section 3A of the new zoning act, local communities must pass a by-law at Town Meeting that complies with certain requirements of the Zoning Act.

In North Andover, the town must meet the following requirements;

1. Identify at least one district comprising of a minimum of 50 acres of developable land.

2. Zone for a minimum of 1,191 units.

3. Meet a minimum threshold of 15 units per acre of land.

North Andover resident and former candidate for State Representative, Joe Finn says he adamently opposes the massive redevelopment proposal put forward by North Andover town officials under the MBTA Community Act.

He publicly argues that there are more beneficial options available to the town according to the law itself.

In the past, Finn has stood with the overwhelming majority of North Andover residents who share their deep concerns about the impact of large-scale multi-family housing developments on the town's infrastructure; traffic, water, sewer, school capacity, public safety, open spaces, town character, and other factors.

During a planning board meeting held on April 16th of this year, Finn contended that the MBTA Community Act presents Massachusetts towns with a variety of options ranging from minimal, to moderate, to significant impacts on town resources.

He also noted that North Andover town officials appear to have selected an option that could have significant negative effects on town resources, surpassing what is considered substantial or sustainable.

Finn says that to mitigate the potential impact on town resources, the land designated for the new zoning could already be home to multi-family housing units, with the newly zoned housing units gradually replacing the existing ones over time.

According to section 3A of the zoning act, the MBTA community act allows for a sufficient number of multi-family housing units to "replace existing uses and structures over time – even though such additions to or replacements may be unlikely to occur soon."

Considering these requirements, Finn argues that the preferable options for those worried about the negative impact on town resources would involve zoning districts that already have multi-family housing units, whereas the less desirable choices would entail districts without existing multi-family housing units.

By selecting districts that already include multi-family housing units (with numerous options available), North Andover could gradually substitute these units over time, potentially minimizing the impact on town resources.

But that doesn't seem to be what town officials want to do. It seems, from what they have said on social media, that they want to pack in as many housing units and overpopulate the town to make it more like a city, than a town.

That's not what North Andover residents want.

Rather than opting for more conservative choices, town officials have zeroed in on two districts (Osgood Landing & Market Basket/ North Andover Mall) that significantly surpass some of the stipulated minimum requirements outlined in the housing act. This would place an excessive burden on town resources for sure.

To begin with, these proposed districts don't currently have multi-family housing units available to be replaced, resulting in an addition of aproximately 1,400 units beyond the town's current inventory. That's apoximately 5,600 new residents in North Andover burdoning the infrastructure of the town.

This choice also significantly surpasses the minimum required acreage by 41 acres (91 vs. 50) and exceeds the required number of minimum housing units by about 200 or more units.

Additionally, it includes a substantial amount of non-residential space for other purposes that are not obligatory under the new state law.

Essentially, town officials appear to be putting forth a proposal of such scale that it surpasses an already exceedingly burdensome state multi-family housing law, especially considering that residents previously rejected a redevelopment plan introducing approximately 656 new multi-family housing units a few years ago.

It seems as though town officials now believe they can subject North Andover residents to the severe and over-burdoning impacts of an unnecessarily large-scale development proposal on town resources (which may not be entirely justified) by highlighting that a rejection could lead to the state withholding grant funds and taking legal action.

If you believe that the repercussions of turning down this proposal are as substantial as I do, you might be astonished to witness the outcomes when entities other than North Andover residents shape the town's growth decisions.

Joe Finn says he will be voting NO on this specific proposal at town meeting and I will be too.

Concerns Over Downtown Haverhill Train Station Closing; MBTA Could Allow Some Service

Tim Coco
WHAV RADIO/WHAV.NET

Msachusetts Bay Transit Authority—or MBTA, responding to public outcry over the planned closing of the downtown Haverhill train station, could allow some commuter rail trips or provide busing to the Bradford stop.

As WHAV reported first two weeks ago, MBTA officials confirmed plans to shutter the Haverhill station for 10 to 12 months to commuter rail passengers as part of replacement of the South Elm Street bridge across the river. They did not explain why it would remain open only for freight service and Amtrak Downeaster service between Boston and Maine. Haverhill mayoral Deputy Chief of Staff Josselyn De León-Estrada said this week a meeting with city officials helped spur reconsideration and officials expect a report back in about a week.

"They are looking at alternative service over the original self-diversion plan. They communicated, compared to what happened in other communities, they're going above and beyond for Haverhill and looking at ulterior service. That's what we'll hear back from," she said. De León-Estrada explained, "One option is busing between the stations. Another option is possibly allowing some MBTA trains to come through during peak hours."

She said the MBTA continues to say road closings in Bradford will still be limited to one weekend when they move a pre-fabricated bridge into place as WHAV reported in 2022.

Although WHAV inquired earlier of a reported legislative tour, De León-Estrada confirmed that she and legislators walked back and forth between the Haverhill and Bradford stations Monday, April 22, to "document accessibility concerns." She said staff from the offices of Sens. Barry R. Finegold and Pavel M. Payano and Rep. Andy X. Vargas recorded video of the tour and it was submitted to the MBTA.

"We just really wanted to be able to make the case and say 'Listen, we don't really want to talk about impacts, we want to be able to speak from experience, these are the concerns that we have for people who are being asked to self-divert.' The MBTA was very happy and responsive to that," she said.

After the MBTA gets back to the city, De León-Estrada said the MBTA will start public outreach. "They want to make sure the public and everybody is very well informed prior to anything taking place."

WHAV News file photograph

Haverhill City Councilor Ralph T. Basiliere said he also attended the tour, particularly to speak up for residents of Ward 1 and veterans living in housing adjacent to the downtown train station. "This is 600 feet from one of the region's largest veterans' facilities that depend on this rail line for their tertiary care in Boston," he said.

Summary of Lost TNC Payment Estimates (2023)

	Assumed Hours per Week (Driver Average)	Lost TNC Payment Estimates (2023)
Low-End Estimate	5	$15,782,708
Middle Estimate	20	$63,130,834
High-End Estimate	40	$126,303,952
Best Estimate	**14.93**	**$47,142,950**

Audit of Transportation Network Companies

IN YOUR CORNER with AUDITOR DIZOGLIO

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,

Recently, our office released an analysis illustrating how Transportation Network Companies' (TNCs') classification of drivers as independent contractors or employees significantly impacts TNCs' contribution obligations to Massachusetts employee protection programs such as workers' compensation, unemployment insurance (UI), and paid family and medical leave (PFML). What's a TNC? Think Uber or Lyft, and the services they provide.

With respect to workers' compensation, we conservatively estimate $17,428,606 in lost payments for 2023. If drivers are classified as employees, this means TNCs' have failed to pay tens of millions of dollars into the system over the past decade, precluding employees from accessing workers' compensation benefits.

UI, which provides temporary financial assistance to workers who are unemployed or meet eligibility standards, is funded through taxes paid by employers on their employees' wages. We estimate lost UI payments for TNC drivers at $20,714,327 in 2023. TNC drivers, like other workers, may need this benefit, and the state may have an interest in ensuring that transportation companies in Massachusetts operate on a level playing field.

We also estimated lost TNC payments to PFML. The PFML Act provides workers with up to 20 weeks of paid medical leave for a serious health condition and up to 12 weeks of paid family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition or to bond with a new child. Employers with 25 or more employees are required to contribute to the PFML Fund on behalf of their workforce, including a mandatory employee contribution. If drivers are classified as employees, DLM estimates TNCs' lost contribution to the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Act in 2023 to be $9,000,018.

We determined that if TNCs are not classifying their drivers correctly, using the best available data, it is conservatively estimated that TNCs have failed to contribute approximately $266.4 million into workers' compensation, UI, and PFML for the 2013-2023 period.

Our Division of Local Mandates conducts analyses of important issues facing our communities. This report highlights how TNCs' classification of drivers as independent contractors or employees impacts their contribution obligations to workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, and paid family and medical leave. We encourage the State Legislature and Administration to enact measures to ensure full transparency of driver earnings, hours worked, and other key employment statistics.

To view this report and others, always feel free to visit our website at www.mass.gov/auditor. If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback to our team, I always welcome you to contact my office via email at auditor@massauditor.gov or by phone at (617) 727-2075. If you're ever in the State House, please feel free to visit our team in room 230!

Best regards, Diana ◊

Earth Day and Overpopulation

Kevin Dube
CHAIR, NORTH ANDOVER GOP COMMITTEE

On April 22 the 55th Earth Day was celebrated. Sadly, it came with little fanfare this year. Sure, there were a few mentions. Some politicians touted their green credibility and the moves they are making to save the planet, all of which involve massive spending programs and lowering living standards for western nations. Local sustainability committees held clean up days and touted recycling efforts and composting programs. One thing you heard nothing about from those politicians or groups was any discussion of overpopulation.

A question I always ask when topics of the environment come up is: how we maintain or increase our standard of living, while also saving the planet, and increasing population. I have yet to receive a satisfactory answer to this question. The reality is, you can't do all three. Increasing the living standards, and saving the environment should be the primary objectives for those of us that care about future generations. Regardless how low you set the bar on living standards there is no such thing as "sustainable growth." So why is our government focused primarily on population growth?

Earth Day was founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson, a Democrat. Senator Nelson's main focus was on overpopulation and its effects on the environment. In those early days population stabilization was the main focus of the Earth Day movement. As of the first Earth Day in 1970 there were roughly 3.3 billion people on Earth, and about 205 million people in the US. Today there are over 8 billion people on the planet and the US population has swelled to over 350 million. What happened? With all this focus on the planet, and the environment, why did population growth not only get lost, but rather actually become a taboo subject?

The answer is simple: money. Political campaigns, especially at that national level, are expensive. Sure, there are FEC limits on individual contributions, and corporate and foreign donors are prohibited from donating to individual campaigns. However, super PACs have no such limits.

The truly big money has no interest in limiting population growth. More people mean more sales of everything from toothpaste to toilet paper. Real estate developers especially require never ending growth. After all, without more people there is no need for more housing. This is why corporate funded groups like the Sierra Club focus on things like planting trees and banning plastic bags rather than allow any discussion of overpopulation to come into the narrative.

Until we end our unsustainable addiction to population growth, we really aren't doing anything to "save the planet." In the US that means severely curtailing immigration. Look at what is happening in both the US and in MA. The US borders are virtually open, and the Biden administration is doing everything to ensure all "migrants" can stay in perpetuity.

In MA, where existing residents are fleeing in droves our government is bending over backward to attract as many of those "newcomers" as they can. Both the Biden and Healey administrations, and their supporters, are telling us we have to give up cars, meat, single family homes and a myriad of other things to save the planet. At the same time, they tell us anyone opposing immigration are racist xenophobes. The only solution is more government spending for everything from green energy to more efficient high-density housing. All of which puts more money in their donor's pockets.

Decades ago, Senator Nelson stated: "As far as I know, most organizations are avoiding population issues because they're politically frightened by the charge that comes from some proponents of immigration that if you oppose the immigration policy we have now, you're a racist. There is no way in the world we can forge a sustainable society without stabilizing the population. ... There's no practical way of stabilizing the population of the U.S. without reducing the immigration rate. When do we decide we have to do something, or do we wait until things are as bad here as they are in the countries people want to leave?" When will we truly begin to honor the true spirit of Earth Day and address the primary cause of environmental issues, our human population footprint?

While we in the US cannot control population growth in other countries, we certainly can here. Remember the phrase "think globally, act locally." When it comes to population growth in the US that means lowering immigration. To quote Senator Nelson again "in this country, it's phony to say, 'I'm for the environment but not for limiting immigration.'" ◊

Can Natives From Abroad Claim a Reservation in Massachusetts?

Louis Yarid
VALLEY PATRIOT COMMUNIST

The short answer is yes… Massachusetts CAN facilitate more Indian Reservations. Case and point: Why do they call it Cherokee Nation and not simply a United Cherokee Reservation? When President Jackson ordered the forced removal of Tuscarora, Cherokee, Seminole, Creek, Chocktaw, and Chickasaw people from their tribal lands (thus causing the Trail of Tears), Jackson would never in his lifetime realize the civil rights he gave to Native Americans by removing them from their native lands and giving them other land concessions which started the Reservation Program allowing Native Americans to claim reservations over the landmasses they resettled to.

What does this have to do with Massachusetts today, you might ask? Only this: Over the years, Massachusetts has become a hub and centralized focal point of the American Immigration system. During the Civil War, African Americans, including members of the Gullah Tribe (the only Nationally recognized Reservation for African Americans) and all other Indian Reservations that allied themselves with the Confederate States came specifically to Massachusetts for their right to fight against the Confederacy due to the advent of our own 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment being one of the only colored Regiments in the USA at first. Despite better conditions in Canada, African Americans saw Massachusetts as a model for what the entire country could look like given our track record of racial cooperation since our Constitutional ratification. This fact walked hand-in-hand with the policy of using Native Americans as scouts, translators, and strategists who would end up getting absolutely no credit for their winning strategies just like General Ely S. Parker (Chief of the Seneca, General of Native American scouts, and Commissioner of the US Bureau of Indian Affairs who was the chief strategist and aide-de-camp of Major General Ulysses S. Grant, and was never given credit for a single winning strategy of Grant's).

Today, thousands of people with Native bloodlines from the Caribbean have moved from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and even the US Virgin Islands to Lawrence, MA. All of these people have one thing in common… they were all once invaded and occupied by the US Army & Government. This gives every single one of these former and current US Territories the unique legal ability to claim reservations wherever they become a majority in America given their historical precedent of being integrated into American society and occupied by American forces that took advantage of their people.

Due to the fact that there are Cherokee Reservations in North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Arizona; Navajo Reservations in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado; as well as others who were all forcibly removed from their original lands, the people of Lawrence with their high population with Taino, Guanahatabey, Kalinago/Kalina (Caribs) & Ciguayo bloodlines have the right to claim a reservation for each tribe and begin the legal process of claiming one. North could be set aside for the Tainos & Kalinago/Kalina, and South could be reserved for the Ciguayo and Guanahatabey tribes respectively, or they could all share the city. This is an important solvable issue to address and begin real Native and African American reparations, because the conversation started over a hundred years ago. Ever since the Rough Riders of the US Volunteers' Division liberated Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines in the Spanish-American War, the USA has been a safe-haven for them despite their never-ending persecution as immigrants of color.

That being said, Lawrence could do a lot better for their people of Native descent. Their representation in the Fire and Police Departments have climbed steadily over the years, however something must be said for the concessions that would be available for the citizens who are not related to any Native Caribbeans should a reservation be claimed. The many reservations of the United States already support processes for non-Native citizens to become citizens of their reservations… usually through marriage, which makes the process almost instantaneous if they marry a citizen of a reservation. However, if the reservation were to be claimed and established in a community where non-Native citizens already live, they are given the option to either accept all the benefits of the Reservation or accept a free local government relocation.

Throughout the process of the United States' expansion through Manifest Destiny, before we allowed for the claims of Reservations, American citizens settled on native lands with absolutely no guaranteed protection or legal status, but once the reservations were claimed, those settlers were allowed to live there and receive the same benefits as long as they assimilated with the tribes. This makes the process 100% doable and necessary. Representation is everything, and if we cannot facilitate representation for Native Americans in Puerto Rico due to US Territorial status, nor Cuba or DR due to their independence, we have a duty and responsibility to facilitate that representation on our own soil in places where they have the largest contributions on American society.

Lou Yarid III, member of the CPUSA, MCNAA, TMF, & IATSE

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Women in Government and a Successful BASH

Estela Reyes
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

April is a special month.

Earth Day reminds us to appreciate the trees which are beginning to bloom, and we get a taste of the warmer weather to come. In the Massachusetts House of Representatives, April is a notable month as well, as it marks the passage of the first draft of the state's budget for the next fiscal year. With one round of budget debates behind me, I am familiar with the process and was eager to begin on the FY25 Budget. The familiarity does not, however, make the decisions on the allocation of state funding any easier.

Transparency is a core value of mine. I will use this space to detail the budget process and highlight a couple of budget priorities for the Merrimack Valley, in hopes of making the workings of the State House digestible to readers of the Valley Patriot.

The budget decisions are made and voted on by all 160 members of the MA House of Representatives. We gather in the State House Chambers to review and approve budget amendment requests from local, regional, and statewide organizations. This process occurs over three long days at the end of April. The FY25 Budget is not finalized until it is amended by the MA Senate and the Governor, which will be at the end of July. Our state has seen unprecedented changes this year in environmental damage and in immigration patterns, which meant funding and resources are spread thinner than last session.

Public health is a topic which has been at the center of conversation for quite some time now. Supporting our health care centers, health care workers, community centers, and youth wellness programs are non-negotiables for me. The Merrimack Valley secured funds for several community support programs which range from youth sports to mental health centers. I encourage everyone, of all ages, to get involved with their local community centers. These centers offer invaluable enrichment opportunities such as fitness programs, assistance with accessing housing and support resources, cultural celebrations, community, and more.

It is a priority of mine to support organizations who work towards providing safe, encouraging spaces where youth can learn integral skills like collaboration and team building. Research has long indicated that expanding opportunities for youth to engage in positive encounters lowers their likelihood to choose risky behaviors and encourages a successful transition into adulthood. This is also true of our schools. This budget includes funding to support academic programs for students with disabilities, students who speak English as a second language (ESL), and students who are working to obtain citizenship. Schooling prepares youths for their adult lives. Schools need sufficient educators and courses which support students' growth in academics, communication, and beyond.

What I have listed above hardly scratches the surface of the contents of the FY25 Budget. The House Budget is a 360-page document that is dense with numbers and names. To view the House Budget for yourself, visit malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2025/HouseBudget.

As always, I welcome and appreciate communication from my constituents. Please reach me at estela.reyes@mahouse.gov with any inquiries, questions, or concerns. ◊

Protecting Methuen's Healthcare Access

Francisco Paulino
STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 16TH ESSEX

Dear friends and neighbors,

As your state representative, I'm deeply concerned about the recent developments at Steward Health Care and how they have impacted Holy Family Hospital, a vital institution that has served our community for generations. We must ensure that it continues to be an essential part of our community, providing the care we rely on.

Steward Health Care's Lack of Transparency

In 2016, Steward Health Care sold its hospital real estate to Medical Properties Trust (MPT) and leased it back, putting the financial stability of Holy Family Hospital and other Steward hospitals at risk. This decision resulted in millions of dollars in unpaid rent, leaving these hospitals with a heavy financial burden.

Unpaid vendors and contractors are owed millions, which only adds to the strain.

This lack of transparency, without proper input from local officials or healthcare providers, raises significant concerns about Steward's commitment to providing stable, quality care.

Steward's mishandling of nurse union contracts also led to staffing shortages and compromised patient care. Their inability to negotiate fair contracts and prioritize staffing has left hospitals overworked and understaffed, threatening our health services.

Supporting the Redraft of House Bill 1219

To address these challenges and protect Holy Family Hospital, I strongly support the redraft of House Bill 1219, "An Act enhancing the market review process," which strengthens oversight of healthcare operations. Let me outline how this critical legislation tackles these systemic issues:

1. Market Review Process: The bill establishes a comprehensive review process to monitor significant changes in healthcare operations, ensuring that major shifts don't threaten patient care. This process prevents sudden closures and maintains market stability.

2. Transparency and Accountability: Hospitals will be required to own the land on which their facilities stand to receive state licensure, preventing them from relying on financially burdensome lease arrangements like those that have left Steward hospitals in this current situation.

3. Learning from Steward Health Care's Failures: The legislation also seeks to address broader challenges that have persisted in the healthcare sector since the COVID-19 pandemic. With improved transparency and rigorous financial management, the bill aims to contain healthcare costs and prevent future crises.

4. Containing Costs: The redraft of House Bill 1219 represents the most significant effort to control healthcare costs since the 2012 law that established the Health Policy Commission. This approach minimizes financial strain on patients and providers, ensuring long-term stability.

Emergency Operations Plan for Community Protection

To ensure uninterrupted patient care during potential transitions, Governor Maura Healey's administration has launched an emergency operations plan. It includes creating an incident command center to improve communication between the state, healthcare providers, and investors. The goal is to ensure that residents of Methuen will not wake up to a closed hospital.

Unfortunately, Steward Health Care, which operates Holy Family Hospital, hasn't fully collaborated with the state's efforts to safeguard the hospital's continued services. Despite this, we remain prepared to respond quickly to any evolving situation within Steward Health Care and will continue working to prevent disruptions to patient care.

Preparing for Any Scenario

Our healthcare system must be safeguarded to ensure everyone in our community has access to quality medical care. While we're striving to prevent disruptions at Holy Family Hospital, we're ready to handle any situation that may arise. Our contingency plans will help guarantee continuous care.

Call to Action

The redraft of House Bill 1219 and the emergency operations plan are crucial steps to guarantee that Holy Family Hospital remain operational and an essential institution for generations to come. Together, we can create a healthcare system that serves Methuen, Lawrence and the perhaps Merrimack Valley effectively, ensuring that our families receive the healthcare care they deserve.

Please join me in supporting the redraft of House Bill 1219 to put patients first. Your safety and access to quality healthcare remain and always will be one of my highest priorities. I will continue working diligently to safeguard our beloved hospital and protect these essential services

Former MA State Trooper Sentenced to 3 Years for Conspiring to Steal Overtime and Wire Fraud

BOSTON – A former Massachusetts State Police (MSP) Sergeant was sentenced yesterday in connection with an overtime scheme dating back to 2015.

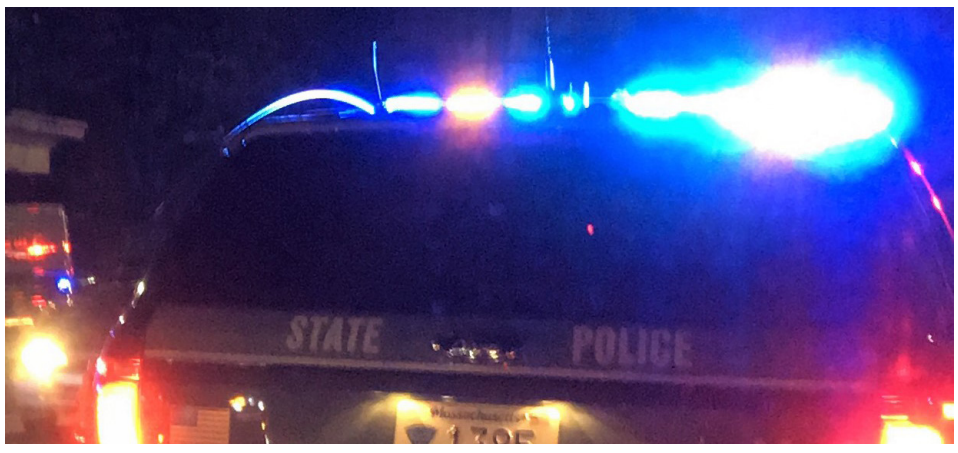
William W. Robertson, 62, of Westborough, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Margaret R. Guzman to three years in prison, to be followed by three years of supervised release.

Robertson was also ordered to pay restitution of $142,774 and forfeit $32,180. In December 2023, Robertson was convicted of one count of conspiracy, one count of theft concerning a federal program and four counts of wire fraud.

On April 26, 2024, co-conspirator former MSP Lieutenant Daniel Griffin was sentenced to five years in prison and three years of supervised release. Griffin was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of $329,163, a fine in the amount of $176,700, as well as a $2,100 special assessment. In December 2023, Griffin was convicted of one count of conspiracy, one count of theft concerning a federal program and four counts of wire fraud.

From 2015 through 2018, Griffin, Robertson and other troopers in the Traffic Programs Section at State Police Headquarters in Framingham, conspired to steal thousands of dollars in federally funded overtime by regularly arriving late to, and leaving early from, overtime shifts funded by grants intended to improve traffic safety.

When the MSP overtime misconduct came to light in 2017 and 2018, Griffin, Robertson and their co-conspirators took steps to avoid detection by shredding and burning records and forms. After an internal inquiry regarding missing forms, Griffin submitted a memo to his superiors that was designed to mislead them by claiming that missing forms were "inadvertently discarded or misplaced" during office moves.



The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts; Christopher A. Scharf, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region; Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; and Harry Chavis, Jr., Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations in Boston made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Dustin Chao, Chief of the Public Corruption Unit and Assistant United States Attorney Adam Deitch of the Public Corruption Unit prosecuted the case.

Saluting Joe DiRocco's Lifetime of Service to Dracut

EYE ON DRACUT

By Brian Genest
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

It's the end of an era in Dracut—and congratulations are in order.

has retired after serving on the Board of Selectmen for 20 years. As a town firefighter, fire chief and selectman, DiRocco has served Dracut for nearly 50 years. He's provided a lifetime of commitment to our children, seniors, business owners, first responders, working families, all of us. At his last meeting in April, DiRocco bid the town farewell. Here's what he had to say about his tenure on the board.

"Thank you, Madam Chair. It's been an honor and a privilege for me. I've had a pretty good life. I had a pretty good run. I had a good life with the fire department. That was my passion, so to say. My father was a firefighter before me and I kind of followed in his footsteps. It meant a lot to me.

The people in town have supported me from day one. When I became chief, me and the guys worked together. We got a couple of new stations. We brought the department forward. I retired in 2002 and in 2004 I ran. That was the first time I ran for Selectman.

I will say that I think that was the same year that Bush and Cheney had run and

they only got 6,671 votes. Susan Tucker was the senator at that time. She got 8,929. I'm proud to say that I got for the first vote, it's probably a record in town I'm not sure, but I got 7,389 votes.

The closest competitor, I'll leave his name out for now, but I'll call him Mr. Venom, he's been obsessed with me for 20 years. He's done nothing but attack me, my family, my friends, anybody I have contact with. So, I don't know who he'll attack now, but I'm sure it'll be somebody. Whoever he's not endorsing, he will probably do that to. For those that don't know their name, it's John Zimini.

But, besides that, I'm very proud to have worked with Dracut. I think we've got a lot of things done over the years. We've got fire stations, we've got schools, we've got a library, we've got this town hall that we're in. It goes on and on and on, the things that I feel that I've been a part of.

And I'm very proud to say that I was born in Dracut, raised in Dracut, lived in Dracut all my life, and I'm proud of Dracut. I think Dracut is a community that a lot of other towns in our area envy because of everything that we've been able to accomplish.

So, as I said, it's my last meeting, but I'll be around. If I can do anything, I'll be glad to. Thank you."

Thank you, Joe, on behalf of so many appreciative citizens. Thank you for your hard work. Thank you for your time and talent. Thank you for your honesty and integrity. Thank you for fighting for the taxpayers. Thank you for your lifetime of service to Dracut!

Brian Genest is the producer and host of Eye On Dracut, winner of the Hometown Media Award for News, sponsored by Lucky Oil.

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Hamilton: Methuen and Haverhill Budget Wins

Ryan Hamilton
STATE REP., HAVERHILL/METHUEN

I'm happy to report that the House Budget has been passed and that Methuen and Haverhill did well in this year's house budget. In Chapter 70, Methuen received 68.62 million, while Haverhill received 87.97 million. In Unrestricted local aid, Methuen received 6.56 million, and Haverhill received 11.87 million.

For Methuen, we secured money for Care Solace. Care Solace is a program that will provide every resident of Methuen with the ability to have a virtual meeting with a mental health professional within 24 to 48 hours of the request. This will be a game changer for anyone living in Methuen. Anyone who has tried to secure a mental health visit knows that it usually takes months to secure an appointment. Care Solace will change that. It has already been implemented in Methuen public schools successfully and will now be available to all residents.

Moving on to Haverhill, I secured funding for the Cogswell Art Center. Cogswell will provide Artspace for artists throughout the Merrimack Valley. This former school in Bradford will be a premier arts and performance space in the region once completed. This is my second year securing this project funding, and I look forward to continuing to work with them until Cogswell is up and running.

Next was Haverhill Inner City Boxing Club, which will receive an earmark to overhaul their weight room. This will allow the club to expand its role within the boxing community and allow those who box there to enjoy a whole boxing training experience. I look forward to touring the gym again and talking with

attendees about how the new equipment has enhanced their experience.

Last, I secured money for Historic New England. Located in Haverhill, Historic New England, I believe it has the most incredible collection of local and regional historic artifacts in the Commonwealth. They are planning an enormous project to further enhance their facility and downtown Haverhill as a destination city. This project would allow Historic New England to display their Litany of artifacts in their collection and allow residents throughout the region to tour and view our shared history.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact my office with any ideas, concerns, or questions at ryan.hamilton@mahouse.gov or 617-722-2090.

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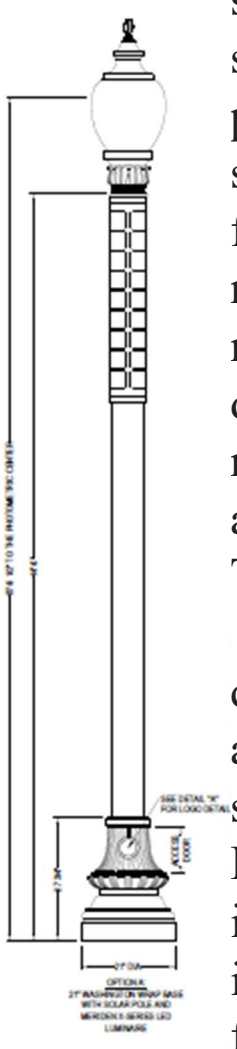
Lawrence Parks Embrace Solar-Powered Illumination

In a forward-thinking move toward sustainability and enhanced public safety, Mayor Brian A. DePeña and DPW Director Jorge Jaime are spearheading a transformative project to illuminate Cronin and Howard Park using solar-powered lighting systems. This initiative marks a significant leap forward for the city, not only in terms of energy efficiency but also in creating safer and more inviting public spaces for residents to enjoy.

At the heart of this endeavor lies the utilization of solar energy, a clean and renewable resource abundant in our region. By harnessing the power of the sun, Lawrence is reducing its carbon footprint and paving the way for a greener future. Solar lighting systems offer a cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative to traditional lighting methods, aligning perfectly with the city's commitment to sustainability.The benefits of solar lighting extend beyond environmental considerations, as these systems also contribute to improved safety and security in our parks. With consistent and reliable illumination provided by solar lights, residents can feel safer when visiting these public spaces after dark.

This enhanced visibility not only promotes outdoor recreation but also serves as a deterrent to crime, making our parks more welcoming and secure for all. The solar lighting systems selected for Cronin and Howard Park boast state-of-the-art technology, including smart solar control systems that optimize energy efficiency and ensure reliable performance. These innovative solutions represent the latest advancements in solar technology, offering a dependable and low-maintenance lighting solution for the city. Furthermore, the installation of solar-powered lighting systems requires minimal disruption to park amenities, thanks to their wireless and modular design. This streamlined installation process minimizes costs and downtime, allowing residents to enjoy the benefits of solar illumination sooner rather than later.Lawrence's decision to embrace solar-powered lighting mirrors a growing trend among municipalities nationwide, with neighboring towns like Topsfield, MA, also adopting similar initiatives.



As communities strive to reduce their environmental impact and enhance quality of life, solar lighting stands out as a practical and effective solution for achieving these goals. In summary, the introduction of solar-powered lighting systems in Cronin and Howard Park represents a significant milestone for Lawrence, symbolizing the city's commitment to sustainability, safety, and innovation. By harnessing the power of the sun, Lawrence is not only brightening its parks but also illuminating a path toward a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable future for all residents.

Patrick's North Shore Eatery will be open soon (at the site of the Old Harrisson's Roast Beef in North Andover is trying out new menu items before they open next month. Abover is the old Tallie-Ho Chicken Barb, lobster rangoon and a Blueberry Cream-Cheese Egg Rolls will be part of the new menu.

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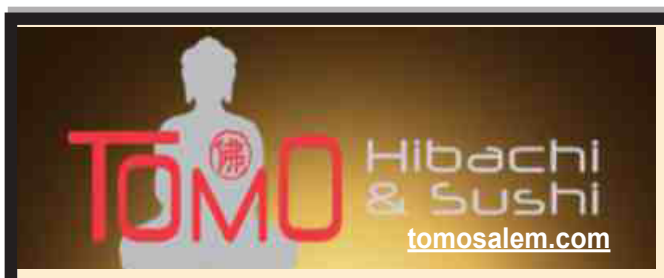

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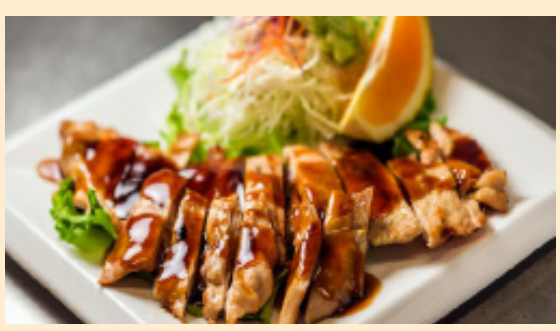

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Interview with Sean O'Brien

Knox's Artillery Regiment Group Creates Live Reenactment of the American Revolutionary War

KANE
VALLEY PATRIOT MASCOT/COLUMNIST

Sean O'Brien resident of Tewksbury, MA certainly lives a life of service. Professionally Sean serves as a North Reading Fire- Fighter and also served in the Massachusetts National Guard. Much of his service time was dedicated to mortars. Kane learned since a young age Sean has been a true history enthusiast. Sean explained to Kane that he comes from a long history of family members that served in the military and value the

importance of learning from history. Sean said, my great grandfather served in World War I, my grandfather served in World War II, and my stepserved in Vietnam."

So, Sean in coordination with many fellow history buffs have formed a Reenactment group, the Knox's Artillery Regiment. The goal is to recreate the history of a Captain Jotham Drury's Company of Artillery, which served in Colonel Henry Knox's Artillery Regiment circa 1776. The group actively reenacts the American Revolutionary War through living history and battle reenactments. Kane learned that Sean personally has been part of American Revolutionary War reenactments since 2006. He started studying in detail British soldiers based on documented information from the time and participated in live reenactment battles. Sean reported to Kane that he is back in the books again as he studies specific soldiers of the Continental Artillery serving in George Washington's army.

Kane was fascinated by the research and documentation utilized to bring the reenactment to life. For example, since sewing machines were not invented yet, clothing made during the battle were handmade. To stay accurate, all clothing for the reenactment is hand sewn. Using original documentation to provide guidance allows the team to be one of the most authentically uniformed and equipped artillery reenactments. Sean proudly told Kane that his team has acquired a light three pound cannon on a field carriage as well as commissioned a heavy iron three pounder cannon to be built and has two coehorn mortars for firing demonstrations. Also to stay accurate to the times, reenactments only include food from that era and participants cook on open fire to prepare food.

Kane learned that Knox's Artillery begins after the battles of Lexington and Concord when the British retreated into Boston being followed by New England Militia companies from New England. After the Battle of Bunker Hill, George Washington, head of the Continental Army, appointed Colonel Henry Knox as the head of Artillery on October 17, 1775. Kane was reminded by Sean that the Massachusetts militia was very well equipped for its time. By law militiamen had to have certain pieces of equipment on their person. Since they knew the conflict was coming, they were drilling for quite some time. Medicine was not available since the treatment of war wounds was in its infancy and many men died due to infection and disease. Sean was excited to report that next year for the 250th he and other members of his group will march 11 miles from Billerica to Boston, with a group of reenactors portraying Captain Edward Farmer's Billerica Militia Company.

Kane asked Sean if he was a historian since the research has been so intricate right down to learning as much as possible about the person you are bringing to life. Sean explained that the members are dedicated to accurate research, so he stated not formally by profession, but portraying history in an accurate light and bringing it to life is the goal. Did you know that Sean also goes into the classroom to teach the history of the Revolutionary War to students? He and Kane discussed how fortunate they are to have basically the birth of the United States of America in their backyard. Sean explained that the students often have great questions.

According to Sean, "the ultimate goal is to keep history alive." Through the reenactment he wants his audience to have a visceral reaction. He hopes by smelling, hearing, and tasting the battle, people will remember the sacrifices that the average person made when they left their homes to join the fight for independence. Sean and Kane were reminded of the quote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" George Santayana, The Life of Reason 1905.

Kane spent his Saturday exploring Battle Road in Concord as well as

KANE: PAGE 18

Good News on the Whittier Tech School

Lenny Mirra
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Sometimes the system works!

Voters soundly rejected a plan for a new Whittier Vocational Tech building at a cost of $444.6 million, and when I say soundly, I mean angrily too. Comments I heard in person and on social media showed voters were turned off not only by the price tag but also by a lack of communication from the Whittier side.

Many felt blindsided by the proposal as it's not obvious why anyone would propose tearing down a building that appears to be in fairly good condition to build an entirely new one. Common sense would suggest updating and repairing the existing building, which is exactly what would happen if it were privately owned by people spending their own money, but common sense is not so common when it comes to government spending.

Funding formulas from Massachusetts School Building Authority encourage districts to tear down buildings and build new instead of repairing existing buildings. It was "cheaper" for the district to build new even though the cost is a lot higher, but only because the district would get less funding from MSBA to pay for repairs.

One thing everyone agreed on was that something had to be done, and a guided tour through the building was more than enough to convince anyone who had any doubt. The building is over 50 years old, and the sewer system is at the end of its useful life. Updating it means that the entire facility would have to be brought to current code requirements, and all of it would be subject to Prevailing Wage laws, so even repairs would add up to hundreds of millions.

And repairs won't change the fact that the school was built in what many call a swamp. The floors of the school are lower than outside ground elevations, so the building is constantly taking in water.

New locations were proposed, but that meant buying a huge parcel of land and, under the terms of Whittier's charter, it had to be within five miles of the Rocks Village Bridge. We needed outside-the-box thinking, and the district will be glad to know that they voted wisely in saying no to the first proposal because it could lead to a much better idea.

The Healey Administration has announced that it is now looking into a shared campus model where a new Whittier Vocational building could be built on the grounds of Northern Essex Community College, which makes total sense.

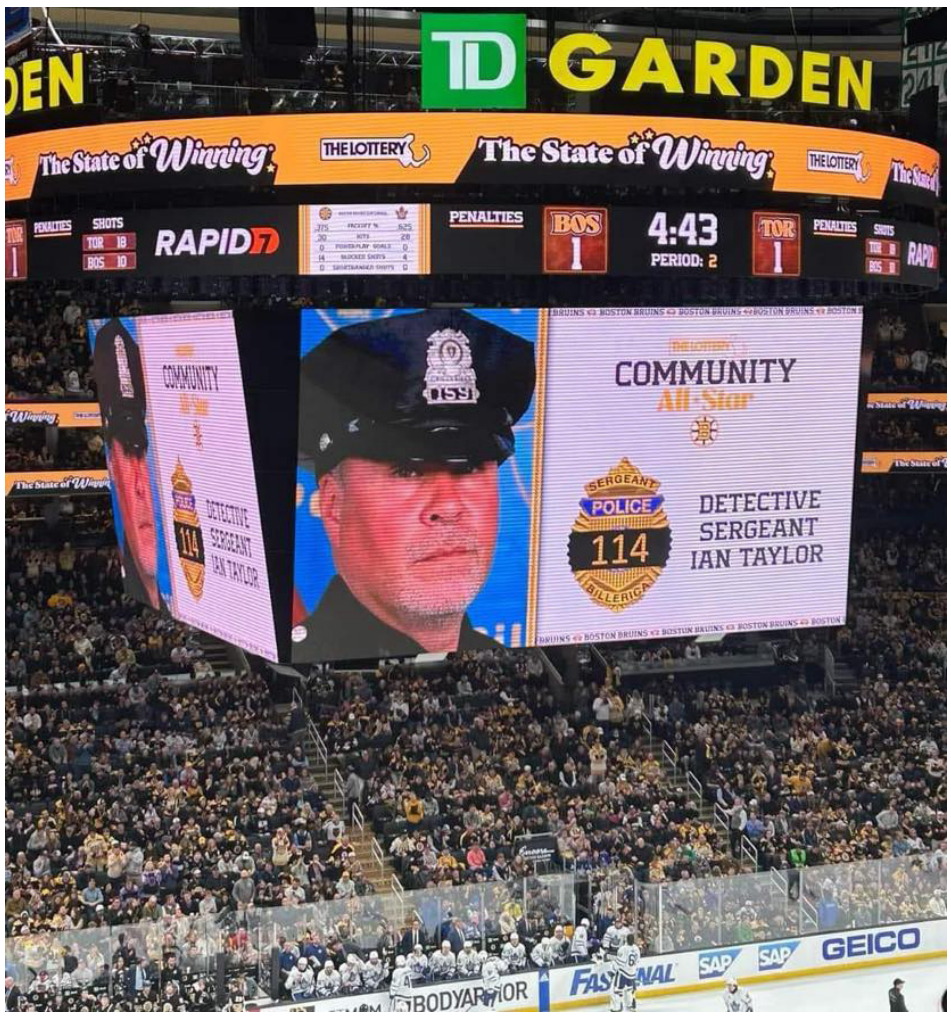
Sharing a campus means not having separate facilities for things like athletic fields, gyms, auditoriums, and administrative offices. The new partnership could also increase enrollment capacity for both schools, which is crucial right now because Whittier currently has to turn away students every year due to a lack of space.

Taxpayers will also be happy to hear that this idea could provide new funding sources and opportunities to help pay for the project, which would be a huge win at a time when property taxes are already skyrocketing.

The process was messy, and the "no" vote may have seemed like a defeat at the time, but the system worked, and the district will likely have a much better facility as a result. ◊

Greater Lawrence Psychological Center Raises $50,000 for the Homeless at "Diamonds are for Derby's" Fundraiser in Haverhill

Carina Pappalardo, CEO of the Greater Lawrence Psychological Center in Lawrence reported last week that the Center's efforts to raise money for The Daybreak Homeless Shelter, Pegasus House and Women's View programs for battered and homeless women was able to raise more than $50,000 with their annual Kentucky Deby fundraiser at the Haverhill Country Club. Over 300 prizes were given out at the event that was attended by more than 250 people. "I'm grateful to everyone who contributed in some way to making the fundraiser successful," Pappalardo told The Valley Patriot. She added that the funds raised "will have an immediate impact on the lives people most in need across The Merrimack Valley." The event was sponsored by Valley Mental Health, US Bank, (Diamonds are Forever), Pentucket Bank, and SPS New England (Goldfinger Sponsors).



Clear Path for Veterans New England Opens Offices in Lawrence to Service Local Veterans

Violet Jessel of Haverhill Turns 100 Years Old!

Violet Jessel, a Haverhill resident, just turned 100 on February 12th and celebrated at the Methuen Senior Center.

She has been a member of the Happy Hearts Choral Group there since it's inception. She's also a member at the Salem Senior Center where she goes for her weekly Yoga class.

She taught Yoga for many years in the Merrimack Valley.

The Staff and management of Enterprise Bank in Lawrence took somem time out last month to bring lunch to the heroes of the Lawrence Fire Department

Reader Conccerned with Money Allocated for Illegal Aliens

Tomi Michele
VALLEY PATRIOT GUESGT COLUMNIST

Dear Editor Duggan ,

I am deeply concerned about the recent decision to allocate an additional $426 million from Massachusetts taxpayers to address the immigration crisis, on top of the $700 million already designated for the fiscal year 2024. This decision not only impacts our state's finances but also has significant repercussions for our low-income citizens.

The disproportionate burden placed on our low-income communities' resources is outrageous. While these individuals already face numerous challenges, including economic hardships and limited access to financial means, diverting over a billion dollars of taxpayer funds to address issues with roots beyond our borders only exacerbates their struggles.

Moreover, it is crucial that we prioritize our nation's sovereignty and uphold the integrity of our immigration processes. While I believe in enforcing our immigration laws with humanity, we must also remain steadfast in ensuring that these laws are respected and upheld.

We cannot ignore the fact that the immigration crisis stems from poor governance in other countries. While it is essential to address humanitarian concerns, it is not the responsibility of Massachusetts citizens to bear the financial burden of other nations' failures.

I urge our elected officials to reconsider their decision and reallocate funds to prioritize the needs of our low-income citizens. Let us focus on strengthening our communities and upholding our nation's sovereignty while addressing immigration challenges in a humane and responsible manner. U.S. citizens ought to be a priority and the state budget and expenditures should reflect that.

Tomi Michele

Remembering Our Heroes
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An Improper Proposal

Philippe Thibault
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT CONTRIBUTOR

The populace in Dracut is fiercely proud of its agrarian ancestry. The wilderness north of the river, known to the native peoples as Augumtoocooke, was incorporated into the Town of Dracut in 1701. The earliest "European "settlers with names of Varnum, Richardson, Fox, and others took to the soil to make their homes and livelihoods. The western section of Dracut later developed into Collinsville and industrialized with the Collinsville Mill. Further downstream along Beaver Brook, the Navy Yard Mills were built along those same banks. Further East still was prime agricultural lands and Dracut's culture was set as a farming community. Even today the townspeople see themselves as "of the land" and declaring the municipality a "Right to Farm" community.

Dracut was the first community to accept the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in Massachusetts when proposed. So enthusiastic was the community to adopt the law it passed Town Meeting prior to the statutory waiting period and required Special Town Meeting to ratify the previous action. Preservation of open space was the impetus for the acceptance and the reason for the unwavering support the law still has today. Saja Farms and Farmer Dave's are two success stories for the partnership between landowners, the State of Massachusetts through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program, and the Town of Dracut's CPA committee and townspeople. This resulted in preserving approximately sixty acres of farmland. Beaver Brook Farm is another farm that was purchased fully by Dracut. The two previous acquisitions were for development rights to the parcels with the landowner retaining the property ownership for agriculture. Beaver Brook Farm reflected the significance of the land as a gateway to Dracut from Lowell on Mammoth Road. It is an iconic scenic view, announcing your arrival in bucolic Dracut as you gaze on the "Long View".

The Proper Farm located in East Dracut on the southern side of Route 113, Broadway Road, is one in a series of farms creating an emerald necklace as you enter Dracut from Methuen. This gateway is no less iconic than that of Beaver Brook Farm on the western side of Town. There has always been dialogue with the owners of these farms to retain the pastoral views and farming heritage Dracut is rightfully proud of. At a recent Board of Selectmen Meeting, Mr. Brox came forward to inform the Board that he had come to the decision through consultation with Mr. Shaw to place his farm, the Proper Farm, into the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program with the State. This would normally be a cause for great celebration with congratulatory and appreciative accolades given to Mr. Brox.

To the dismay of most, Mr. DiRocco stated this property would be a good location for a school. Odd commentary on a subject that was irrelevant to the conversation and unsolicited. Dracut has been under a rash of proposed 40B (affordable) housing projects and in particular Murphy's Farm located along the Methuen Line on Wheeler Street. But for a selectman to suggest a location for an elementary school without consulting or conversations with the School Committee or School Superintendent is reckless. There is a need for a new or renovated school in east Dracut. The Campbell School, built in the early 1970's is predominantly original. The Town through the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) is undertaking a feasibility study to determine the scope of the project. The study will take approximately I year to complete.

There are also other selectmen that consider themselves from a farming heritage, Chair Alison Genest and Jennifer Kopcinski. Both have campaigned on their ancestors' credentials and agricultural prowess. Both claim to support the efforts to preserve open space. The citizens would rightfully expect these "leaders" to advocate for protecting this gem. In fact, this very statement was said to me by a person highly active in the preservation community in Dracut. My response was," they only needed a simple majority to go into executive session. If they didn't want to buy the land, They could have voted no." They not only voted to further the discussions on the purchase of the Proper Farm but voted to discuss it in executive session. Even more curious is the presence of a warrant article for Town Meeting that would have the body vote to "buy the farm" without any back up information. Why do they need to hide behind closed doors? Where is the money for the purchase coming from? Why is there an article for Town Meeting to "acquire" the property? For what will the land be used? The questions go on and on. There is a level of arrogance of a like not seen in Dracut by the ruling elite.

The Purchase of Beaver Brook Farm in Collinsville has been fraught with comparable questions and debate. Alison Genest campaigned on these very questions and against the purchase of Beaver Brook Farm all together as wasteful. You would think her slogan this time would be "Not Again." There are rumors of another municipal use as a Department of Public Works garage. An even worse use of prime farmland. What a gateway welcome into Dracut with twenty-four bays of twelve foot high by ten-foot-wide overhead doors and mountains of sand, salt, and gravel. Mind you, there is already a DPW garage at the Dillion Center on Hildreth Street, centrally located in Dracut. Any new facilities needed could be built there. I think the more plausible reason for Joe Dirocco's desire to purchase the Proper Farm is a final, farewell slap at Warren Shaw. Once a longtime friend of DiRocco, there has been a disagreement on the handling of town management and governance. So deep has the divide become that DiRocco chided Shaw about his editorials on 980 WCAP Saturday Morning Live radio show.

The topic of the Proper Farm has not garnered the discussion it deserves. The "secret squirrel" attitude of those selectmen mentioned may have some relationship to the silence. The Dracut Land Trust is waking and watching the unfolding events.

The Community Preservation and the Open Space Committees have started to express concern. The School Department has made it clear; this site is undesirable. Will Dracut do the proper thing with the Proper Farm, or will they make an improper proposal?

Jocelyn Maroun with State Senator Pavel Payano and Lawrence City Councilor Staphanie Infante at Jocelyn's by Sevmar in Methuen

Salem's Sevamar's Mediterranean Bistro Opens a New Place in Methuen

By Maureen Rooseboom

People love to come to the SeVmar Mediterranean Bistro at the corner of Main Street and Shannon Road in Salem, N.H. because it's a cozy fun place to eat.

Jocelyn Maroun says she worked in this Salem restaurant (formerly called the Salem Kabob) her parents owned when she was in high school at Central Catholic a few years ago.

Now she's back with her partner Kelvin Severino and has opened a new SeVmar bistro in Methuen, the place where she grew up.

"It's called Jocely's by SeVmar. We have a great staff, and good traditional Mediterranean food," Jocelyn said. "I have an incredible partner, Kelvin Severino who handles the business end of things, while I handle the front end and customer service."

"We make a good team," she added. "He likes to give extra touches in details, décor and design, while I have a good sense for the customer experience."

She went on to add, "We have all organic and fresh food. We also offer a lot of vegan and gluten-free food as well."

Jocelyn's also happy they can interchange the kitchen staff and serving staff from both restaurants.

She's says she and Kelvin are excited to make this new place on Merrimack St. in Methuen (the old Sahtain and Savasgtanos) as cozy, happy and intimate a place as the one in Salem.

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The Season of Hamas Love

Kenneth Willette
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

It costs $360,000 to educate and house the average undergraduate over 4 years at Columbia University. The current endowment fund at Harvard University is estimated at a whopping $53 billion. Imagine the radioactivity of soon-to-be graduates of both institutions attempting to obtain jobs at law firms, investment houses, government agencies and Fortune 500 companies. Because chanting "Kill the Jews" and screaming "From the River to the Sea" will not endear these protestors with the real world that prides itself on pristine corporate images, civil rights protections, anti-harassment policies and equal opportunities under the law. When a bipartisan Congressional Resolution condemns "From the River to the Sea," a protestor might be persona non grata (unwelcome) in the competitive job market.

Somehow the Ivy League presidents missed the history lesson provided by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which strictly prohibits religious discrimination for institutions of higher learning that receive any federal funding. Harvard University was once the proud school that educated Presidents Teddy Roosevelt (who also attended Columbia Law School) and JFK, both strong-willed world leaders who knew our enemies and fought against discrimination. Nowadays, brainwashed students perceive America and Israel as evil, warmongering regimes, enablers of a phantom genocide in Gaza.

As I predicted in a prior column, the mob protests would continue to escalate and resort to tactics that Nazi Germany Brownshirts would celebrate. Using hammers to smash the windows at Hamilton Hall reeks of Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass), a Nazi-led destruction of Jewish homes, businesses, and synagogues. Confronting Jewish students, denying pathways to their education, and threatening violence have no place in any society. To claim that the encampments cause no harm to others is an absolute lie. The intimidation factor would be very familiar in the Democratic-controlled Jim Crow South of the 1950s and 1960s.

How sad and pathetic that the Radical Democratic establishment is more interested in Trump's alleged dalliances than stopping pervasive hate crimes and mob violence. Biden was more interested in going on Howard Stern than speaking directly to reporters. But no news group calls out his void of interaction with the Fourth Estate, which has been complacent in his failure to hold regular press conferences and move away from scripted questions. But as we recall, Biden's former press secretary now works for MSNBC.

When have the Palestinians ever been peaceful, honest, cooperative, and uncorrupted negotiators in the Middle East? They rejected outright the UN Resolution offering a two-state solution. In 1948, they eagerly joined regional military forces in a coordinated and unprovoked attack on the Jewish nation-state. Three major conflicts have tested the very survival of Israel, which they have emerged victorious against overwhelming numerical forces. Cowardly PLO terrorists killed unarmed Israeli athletes during the 1972 Munich Olympic Games. The curriculum of Hamas is designed to indoctrinate children with a bloodthirsty desire to eradicate the Jewish nation. They wasted billions of international aid funds on enriching Hamas/PLO leadership, paying off the families of suicide bombers, constructing miles of tunnels and smuggling weapons into hospitals and children's bedrooms, which are clear violations of the Geneva Convention of embedding combatants and weapons with civilians.

Palestinians actively interfered in the internal politics of both Egypt and Jordan. And Arafat notoriously rejected a final statehood resolution offered through the Oslo Peace Accords. Tell me again, soon-to-be graduates, how does that history of violence, obfuscation, and confrontation work into your college encampment narrative of peace, love, and non-violent resistance?

But like I said before, the Radical Left has a very serious optics problem, which could cost Biden the election. The media consistently attack MAGAs as racist, xenophobic, and antisemitic. The real monsters are the jihadists (notice the garb) on campuses across America who are weaned on erroneous social media posts and spoon-fed propaganda by celebrity professors. You really think the party affiliation of these protestor thugs match those attending a Trump rally? Be serious!

What a laughable premise under ordinary times, but these, unfortunately, are very volatile and dangerous times. 20% of the youngest generation deny the existence of the Holocaust. Unfortunately, some believe the falsehood that October 7th was an AI generated hoax or a staged event. According to Pew Research Center findings, 46% of young adults oppose the Israeli response to terrorism. Through the antisemitic BDS movement, they often subscribe to a warped world view that no nation should ever engage in trade and cultural exchanges with Israel.

These Ivy League students are even confused on the definition of genocide. How Hamas morphed into an oppressed class worthy of protection after the horrors of October 7th is breathtaking. How complicit is the mindset of students who ignore the depths of evil, including widespread sexual violence documented by the UN. And how can anyone trust the purveyors of the horrific deaths of innocent men, women, and children in Israel, to then provide accurate numbers of the death toll in Gaza.

Would we trust ISIS or the Taliban to provide such numbers in the past? But somehow terrorist Hamas forces can supply intel to our media sheep. We should all reject journalistic laziness and an abject failure to independently verify the actual deaths in Gaza. The press pool disclaimers automatically destroy any credibility.

Are we equating the firebombing of Tokyo and Dresden during World War II as acts of genocide? Those air raids killed hundreds of thousands of civilians. Do we cast Truman's authorized atomic bomb strikes as the actions of a war criminal?

Any comparison of these protestors to the Civil Rights movement and the pacifist resistance of MLK really makes me question whether any of them ever picked up a book. MLK engaged in an effective economic boycott, advocated for the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, and loved the oppressor in a Christian philosophy that moved this nation forward. Sadly, these protestors are apparently loving the terrorists, embracing the rapists, and celebrating the mass murder of innocents. Hitler would be proud. ◊

KANE FROM PAGE 13

the Paul Revere Capture Site and Visitor Center. He was humbled by the experience. He is hopeful that he will remember to practice gratitude and not take his freedom for granted. Thank you, Sean, O'Brien for all that you do, and fellow members of the Reenactment movement. You are keeping us aware and a critical chapter in our history alive.

Check out knoxsartillery.com they are recruiting.

Kane Peaslee, Woof
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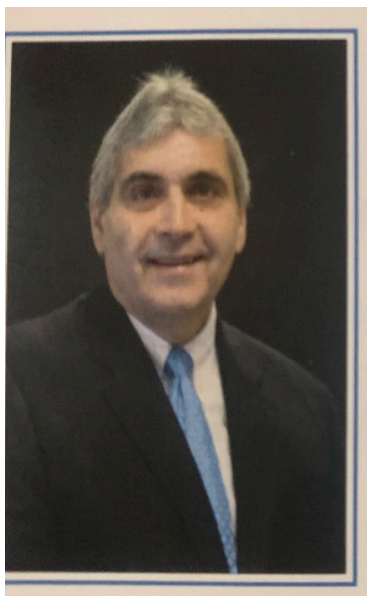

Mike Sullivan
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Cell: 978-204-2758
Email: sull33@aol.com

Michael A. Colizzi: President
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LAWRENCE CITY ATTORNEY'S CONFLICT NOT DISCLOSED IN SCOTT WOOD CASE

I'm not sure why Lawrence City Attorney Tim Houten gave such poorly destructive advice to Mayor Brian DePena to fire Scott Wood, but Houten has a clear conflict on the case and never disclosed it to the mayor while giving him advice on this case.

Houten served on the Middleton Board of Selectmen with Haverhill Mayor Melinda Barret's Chief of Staff, Christine Lindberg. Given that Barrett is driving the effort to target Wood for permenant unemployment for daring to run gor mayor against her last year, you would think Houten would have disclosed his ties to Barret. But, he didn't. And now, the Mayor of Lawrence has put the city in a terrible position to lose a multi-million lawsuit for illegally firing Wood on the reccomendation of an attorney who, at the very least has the appearance of a conflict.

DEJESUS LAWSUIT AGAINST METHUEN MAKES SOME INTERESTING CLAIMS

Methuen Police Detective Charles DeJesus has filed an explosive and truly unbelievable lawsuit against the City of Methuen claiming he was forced to endure openly racist co-workers who used the "N" word, mocked the abuse of Latino and Black Methuen residents, joked about taking their time to NARCAN minority residents, and targeting him for retaliation for comoplaining about the alleged racist behavior of Methuen Police. Without commenting on the outrageous allegations against his fellow officers, I did want to call your attention to one passage in his lawsuit that sheds light on sometnign I have been saying for more than 3 years.

Buried near the end of the 26 page list of allegations against the Methuen Police Department was a passage where DeJesus claimed that he approached a member of the Methuen City Council for help with his being targeted by fellow officers and when he explained how other Methuen Cops were acting in a clearly racist way, the Methuen City Councilor ignored his concerns and was only interested in enlisting him to get dirt on retired Methen Police Chief Joe Solomon.

So, according to DeJesus, this member of the council did nothing to help stop the racial harassment against him because they were obsessed with getting dirt on Solomon for political reasons and couldnt be bothered with a victim of harassment and targeting.

It's going to be interesting to get the details of which city councilor DeJesus reached out to for help and exactly what that conversation entailed once this goes to trial.

DAN RIVERA OUT AT MASS DEVELOPMENT

Former Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera has resigned as president and CEO of MassDevelopment, a publilc/private agencey that deals with economic development of public buildings and consturction projects. Rumors ran rampant through Lawrence that Rivera was eyeing the top spot at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center while others ran with the possibility that he may be looking to run for a much higher office. Either way, the Healey/Driscoll administration is thrilled that the man they considered a traitor to the Democratic Party (he was appointed by "Republican" Charlie Baker) is out and they now have another patronage job to sell at the state level. For those who are spreading the rumor that Rivera is thinkig of running against Brian DePena next year for Mayor, the city charter prohibits Rivera from running for mayor again.

HEARTS, HUGS, and HOPE ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP will take place May 23rd, at 6pm at Methuen Village Assisted Living and Memory Support Community, 4 Gleason Street, Methuen. Attendees will learn about proven strategies to help you better care for your family member. This group is available both in person and virtually. Contact Director of Compass Programming Deborah Cabral at dcabral@methuenvillage.com or 978-685-2220 for more information and to RSVP.

NEW DRACUT COMEDY CLUB OPENS MAY 10th

A new comedy club is coming to Dracut at the function room located at the Village Inn at 544 Broadway Rd.with the first show scheduled for Friday May 10, at 8 pm with a double headliner event starring Chris Pennie and Joe Espi, with the show being hosted by Mike Smith of Laugh Riot Comedy.

Pennie has been seen on Comedy Central, and at the Boston Comedy Festival, Mohegan Sun, Giggles, Kowloon and on CMT (TV) where he was a national finalist for the Funniest Comedian in America. Espi regularly appears at Giggles and Kowloon as well as Laugh Boston, Foxwoods, Patriot Place, and has performed at Catch a Rising Star.

Tickets are $24 and available through the following link https://birdease.com/ComedyNight. The Village Inn is working in conjunction with Laugh Riot Comedy which books fundraisers and comedy shows at numerous venues from Plymouth, Mass to Tilton, NH including the Tupelo Music Hall in Derry, the Phoenician in Haverhill, the Newburyport Firehouse Theater, the Natick Center for the Arts, the Old Salt in Hampton, and more.

"We have been looking at the Village Inn for a long time," said Smith who formed Laugh Riot Comedy some 22 years ago. "We think this can be a great location for the comedy fans of Dracut, the west side of Methuen, Lowell, Pelham, and Salem, NH, all of which are about a 15-minute ride to the Village Inn.

"We are, limiting seating to about 100 people so that everyone who comes to the shows will have a clear, unobstructed view. It will be an intimate atmosphere with no one more than 30 feet or so from the comedians.

"This will be our first show so if people are planning to eat, dinner will be in the dining area of the restaurant prior to the show which will be in the function room. We are hoping this works out and if it does, we plan to bring the likes of Steve Sweeney, Lenny Clarke, Paul D'Angelo and other top comedians to the room."

For additional information contact Laugh Riot Comedy at (603) 475-8624 or email msmith789@comcast.net .

NEWBURYPORT CHARITABLE FOUNDATION DONATES $5K TO AMESBURY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Newburyport Bank Charitable Foundation has donated $5,000 to the Amesbury Educational Foundation, Inc. (AEFI) in support of the Dr. Edward Messner Memorial Annual Hall of Honor. Honorees are chosen and honored each year from one of three categories: former students, former educators, and friends of education. The honorees are inducted at the annual Hall of Honor ceremony, which is AEFI's largest and most significant event of the year. It will be held on April 26, 2024 at 6 pm at St. Joseph's Hall

Since 1981 AEFI has provided funding to Amesbury schools for a variety of projects. Every penny contributed stays in the community to help guarantee an excellent education for children, leading to higher quality jobs and an enhanced quality of life for generations to come. To date, AEFI has awarded over $800,000 in grants to Amesbury School educators. Funds raised by the Foundation are primarily

NEXT PAGE

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

2024 Edmond Lo
Memorial Scholarship
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distributed in the form of grants to teachers and administrators using a competitive grant process. Educators submit proposals for programming inside their classrooms. Proposals are encouraged which demonstrate innovation, are collaborative, have a potentially broad impact upon the school district and support the mission, objectives and strategies of the Amesbury Public Schools' Strategic Plan. All proposals must promote rigor, provide challenge for all students and enrich students' education.

WHISTLER HOUSE YOUTH SUMMER ARTS PROGRAM, INSTRUCTING YOUNG ARTISTS FOR OVER 10 YEARS!!!

The Youth Summer Art Program is open to children grades 5 to 8, ages 10 to 14 years. Each week-long session focuses on a different art form and combines exciting hands-on art creation with museum tours and art history discussions, connecting real works of art with the day's activity. Professional artists and educators will direct creative and age-appropriate activities using a variety of media in the museum's historic house, Parker Gallery, and in the adjacent Whistler Park. Local visiting artists will come to speak about their works in the week's featured medium.

Week 1: July 8 - 12th, - DRAWING
Week 2: July 15 - 19th - PAINTING
Week 3: July 22 - 26th PRINTMAKING & COLLAGE
Week 4: July 29 - August 2nd - SCULPTURE

Classes will take place Monday through Friday from 9AM to Noon. Class fee is $175 per student per week. Scholarships are available for aspiring artists in the community who meet the criteria. Contact the Museum for further information on this program: 978-452-7641 or dgain@whistlerhouse.org.

ESSEX HERIGAGE HOSTS NATIVE AMERICAN STORYTELLER ANNE JENNISON

The Essex National Heritage Commission (Essex Heritage) will welcome Native American storyteller, historian, and educator, Anne Jennison, to the Salem Armory Regional Visitor Center on Saturday, May 18th at 11am.

Anne will be performing some of her favorite traditional Abenaki/Wabanaki stories. This engaging and interactive presentation features the "Animal People" and their adventures in the Northeastern Woodlands. With more than 30 years of experience as a performing storyteller, Anne brings a wealth of knowledge to her retelling of timeless indigenous stories, that also teach important lessons.

All ages are welcome, and the event is free to attend, but registration is strongly encouraged as space is limited. Registration is available through the Essex Heritage website: https://essexheritage.org/event/abenaki-woodland-stories-with-anne-jennison/

"We are very excited to host Anne Jennison at the Salem Armory Regional Visitor Center, storytelling is such an important part of cultural heritage for many communities. Performers like Anne play a vital role in preserving these oral traditions for future generations which continue to pass on knowledge and values," said Essex Heritage CEO Annie C. Harris.

visit www.essexheritage.org or call (978) 740-0444.

NORTHEAST MA YOUTH ORCHESTRA PRESENTS AN AFTERNOON OF SPRING CONCERTS

IPSWICH - The Northeast Massachusetts Youth Orchestras presents An Afternoon of Spring Concerts on Sunday, May 19th, at the Dolan Performing Arts Center, 130 High Street, in Ipswich, MA. The 2pm concert features NMYO's Prelude String Ensemble, Overture String Ensemble, and Intermezzo Orchestra. The 4pm concert features NMYO's advanced ensembles: Wind Ensemble, Select Flute Choir, and Symphony Orchestra. The concerts will include a mix of classical and contemporary music including works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Grainger, Mackey, Dvořák, Nishimura, and more. The concerts are free and no tickets or reservations are required.

The concerts will also be live-streamed on NMYO's YouTube channel @ NMYOrch! If you prefer to watch from the comfort of your home, visit nmyo.org and click the link on the Home Page to see the concert in real time.

NMYO's Gold Benefactor and Conductors Circle sponsors are the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Cape Ann Savings Bank, Coburn Charitable Society, Cummings Properties, Demoulas Foundation, Institution for Savings, and Johnson String Instrument-Carriage House Violins. The Ipswich Cultural Council, as well as the councils of Hamilton-Wenham, Topsfield, and Boxford also support this concert and NMYO.

THE DOCTOR IS IN!

Widening Disease Definition

Dr. Piere Ghassibi
MEDICAL CONTRIBUTOR

Greetings.

This topic is dear to me, but it may generate some objections, more so from companies that make money from selling us medications and supplements, but also from doctors and nurses who have been brainwashed by these companies. Yet, the ideas are not only mine.

Let me put it my way: none of us is perfect physically or mentally.

We all have at least a little depression, a little anxiety, some joint pains, some dyslexia, some esophageal reflux, maybe some cholesterol, some occasional high blood pressure, some frequent chronic fatigue, some insomnia, some irritable bowel and some sleep apnea with snoring. The issue here is that we are calling this little of any of these conditions a disease that needs treatment and we are criticizing doctors for not diagnosing it and not treating it. We are all affected subconsciously by advertisements and believe what the pharmaceutical companies tell us. We know too well now that some companies are relying on false statistics and incomplete studies to very strongly market their products.

Doctors and patients are falling victims. But how can we tell who's right and who's not telling the whole truth?

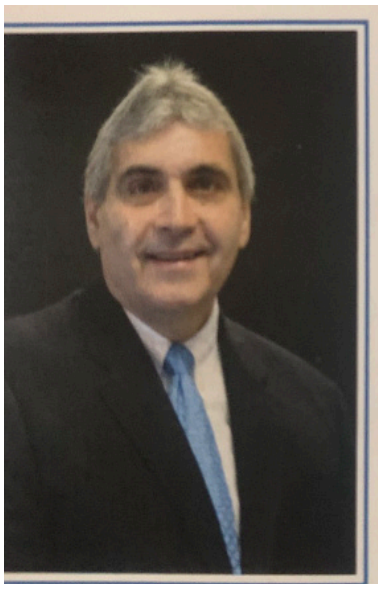
Add to this corruption. Practicing doctors, nurses, dieticians, are not the ones doing the studies and rely on information gathered elsewhere. Of course, the FDA helps screen out incorrect claims, but the FDA is not perfect and often just as gullible.

If the surveys for a number of symptoms and conditions are correct, then most adults need to be on sleep apnea machines, blood pressure meds, antidepressants, vitamins and supplements. Experience has not supported this. Add to this the statistical term " The number needed to treat ", or NNT. As an example, the 2012 and 2016 guidelines give us a NNT of 400 for statins, which means that we have to treat 400 people who are at low risk to prevent one bad cardiac event. Counterbalance this with the side effects. Yes, someone might still choose to take a statin medication, but we doctors and nurses have to give that person the honest statistics.

I do not think that it is easy for people to find good answers to these difficult questions. We ought at least to courageously ask our doctors for the facts. I had patients who knew more than me about their condition because they did their research. I wish the FDA made this research for us a little bit more obvious and more easily available.

P. Ghassibi, MD
ghassibi@hotmail.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



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Property Sales, Foreclosures for APRIL, 2024 in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover. (All properties are listed in order; seller, buyer, price, address.)

Northern Essex Registry of Deeds

M. Paul Iannuccillo, Register

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts

ANDOVER

Mary Ann Millar, Jamie M Curley Tr & Timothy J Curley Tr & Jamie M Curley 2016 Revocable Living Trust & Timothy J Curley Family Revocable Living Trust, $2,300,000, 64-64R Central St

SAI Builders LLC, Gerald F & Nina Caron, $1,500,000, 21 Washington Ave

Thomas J Timmins & Kathleen M Callahan, John M Renda & Kelsey Kinton-Renda, $1,253,000, 6 Landau Ln

Lawrence J Partyka Tr & Angela M Partyka Tr & Lawrence J Partyka & Angela M Partyka Living Trust, David & Jaclyn Spivey, $1,252,000, 4 Cricket Cir

Xiaopeng Yang & Bing Zhao, Sujit Jalgaonkar & Supriya Gawas, $1,225,000, 4 Courtney Ln

Penelope Valdez Mejia, Jian Ling Zheng & Xiuzhi Zhuang, $1,100,000, 13-15 Tewksbury St

Robert J & Julie Batten, Brian & Ashley Gleavy, $1,053,220, 2 Greenbriar Cir

Timothy J Cremin Tr & Patricia A Cooney Tr & Creamin Family Living Trust, Philip Brown & Suzan Iioglu, $845,000, 6 Athena Cir

Joseph N & Leslie JB Kim, Jummy Funke David & Seyi Emmanuel Oyajumo, $840,000, 20 Copley Dr

Revive Homes LLC, John Fontaine & Leanne M Paradiso, $830,000, 89 Lowell St

Kallony Real Estate LLC, John Cutler Brown & Emily Grace Bulkeley, $790,000, 35 Gould Rd

Fieldstone Meadows Development Corp, Sai Builders LLC, $750,000, 56 Sunset Rock Rd

Susan J Spark & Thomas M Adams, Mark S & Julie P Ratte, $700,000, 89 Pine St

Marc G Lajoinie & Tina M Enrico, DJA LLC, $650,000, 9 Hartigan Ct

Barbara A O'Sullivan & Robert J O'Sullivan & Joseph T Broderick Est, Matthew McIver, $546,250, 37 Enmore St

Donald S Wilson Tr & Richard J Wilson Tr & Wilson Irrevocable Family Trust, Suzanne E Hyslip, $525,500, 1 Powder Mill Sq Unit 104

Gheorghe Iancu, Judith A Kernell, $474,000, 2 Francis Dr Unit 403

Christopher McNeill & Teresa McNeill-Balian, Sayward Allen, $449,000, 1 Powder Mill Sq Unit 310A

First Landing Investments LLC, Indo Renovations Inc, $421,666, 21 Webster St

Bruce S Hood, Sydney-Anne Hood, $400,000, 40 Wildwood Rd

Kenneth E & Pamela M MacKenzie, Abigail & Caroline Judson, $400,000, 98 Main St Unit B

Rita Curtis, Ortins Capital Partners Group LLC, $367,000, 58 Chandler Rd

Keith E Moore, First Landing Investments LLC, $358,000, 21 Webster St

Patricia L Wermers, Catherine A Fosher, $355,000, 16 Balmoral St Unit 316

L & X Realty Group LLC, Barakat Botros, $301,000, 2D Colonial Dr Unit 20-6

Anne M Kannam, Nicholas J Maniscalco, $227,298, 170 Haverhill St Unit 117

LAWRENCE

279 Park Management LLC, Essex Re Investment LLC, $2,150,000, 348, 352-354 Haverhill St

Arlenny Gutierrez, Elsa & Merlyn Properties LLC, $875,000, 219, 221-223 South Union St

Leonardo Presley Fernandes, Dionny Ruiz Alcequiez & Melvin Guzman, $836,000, 10-12 Lafayette Ave

Nana N Osei, William Giles, $780,000, 15-17 Clifton St

Alfonso Garcia Reinoso & Deinorah Garcia , Kiana Moudarri & Lynne Walkling, $755,000, 59 Eutaw St

Robert E Wescott Tr & RGW Realty Trust, 49 Methuen Street LLC, $750,000, 49 Methuen St

Hilario V Romero & Rosa Antigua De Vidal, Sonaly E Sanchez & Willenny Colon Sanchez & Ashley Mendez, $715,000, 119-121 Arlington St

Reinaldo Pica & Melissa Rodriguez & Myriam L Rodriguez Life Est, Ana M Rodriguez Peguero, $710,000, 27-29 Wilmot St

George G & Claire T Cormier/Claire T Pageau, Josue P Nunez Lopez & Ida Aixa Nunez, $560,000, 71 Mount Vernon St

Jensy & Noelia D Fernandez, Luzmel & Grenyer M Ramos, $550,000, 300 Colonial Rd

Patricia Jarrell Tr & Hazel S Belanger Irrevocable Trust, Karla Burgos & Paul Goode, $545,000, 16 Davis St

Jesus & Rosa Margarita Mejia, Francisco J Martinez & Katherine A Rosa, $525,000, 12 Sumner Ave

Valdez Enterprises LLC, Wilson Acevedo Perez & Yaneli Ulloa Guichardo, $520,000, 65 Ames St

Sandy Duran, Francisca Antonia Rosario & William Tejada-Lora & Wilfreed Tejada Villa, $515,000, 52 Oakside Ave

Manuel & Stacy D Gonsalves, Christopher A Pocasangre, $515,000, 88 Groton St

Michael J Salach Tr & 2 Mt Vernon Terrace Real Estate Trust, Cassio & Andreia Cristina Da Silva Souza, $505,000, 2 Mt Vernon Terr

Jonathan Pena Santiago, Fernando V Colon Pena & Reimy Oscar Rosa-Rivera, $491,000, 11 Weare St

Perla M & Andres Guzman, Eva L Trinidad & Aura Bonilla Hiraldo, $485,000, 17 Hall St

Leonard P Mixon Jr & Douglas M Mixon & Marjorie Lenotte & Kenneth P Mixon, WF Solutions LLC, $480,000, 50-52 Bodwell St

Yngrid D Otero & Luis G Tejada Sosa & Nidia De Maria Hernandez-Galdamez, Nereida A Del Rosario & Carmen Del Rosario, $475,000, 24 Newton St

Jason Sabatino, Elvin A Leal Hernandez & Mira Isabel Galicia Barillas, $470,000, 33-35 Perry Ave

Empire Investments LLC, Rafiris Sterling Villalona Lebron & Flerida Eloisa Tejeda Guerrero, $465,000, 251 Prospect St

Emmanuel A Cabrera, Berardo Ramiro Melara, $460,000, 76 Amherst St

Francisco Santiago & Maria Correa-Santiago, Marcos Andre Dias, $460,000, 20 Beaconsfield St

Shaun Phillip McLellan, Mariely Alvarez Perez & Luis Angel Ventura Gonzalez, $450,000, 44 South Bowdoin St

Joel R DeLeon, Lynette Alvarez, $440,000, 116 Weare St

Carlos Melendez, Fausto Gomez & Maria Sanchez, $430,000, 90-92 Jamaica St

Daniel & Allyson Turrisi, Darlyn & Lisbeth Vidal, $410,000, 142 East Haverhill St Unit 1

Didier Beauvil & Rossy Escarlett Segura Ramirez/Rossy Scarlett Segura Ramirez, Thinh Phuc Nguyen & Tam Thanh Phung, $400,000, 80-80A Ferry St

Christopher S McAdam, Ruben J Munoz, $395,000, 24 Ames St

Daniel Merrill, Essex Management & Realty Property Inc, $350,000, 59 Kendall St

Carmen R Gonzales, David P Valley, $265,000, 92 Beacon St Unit 7

Jeanne T Molloy Tr & RW Potvin Dracut Street Trust, Jeanne T Molloy Tr & Alan A Potvin Tr & Iban Properties Trust, $200,400, 11 Dracut St

Joel Klinker, Gerardo Tejada, $125,000, 91 Summer St Unit 7

METHUEN

Donahue Sales Inc, Heavenly Investments IV LLC, $4,600,000, 25 Calumet Rd

Anne Marie & Robert Gordon, Fatima Bougma, $980,000, 5 Castle Dr

Anthony L & Maria C Consoli, Edens & Tamara L Leneus, $925,000, 3 Highwoods Dr

Paul W & Lynette L Pappas, Nancy Mahoney Tr & Thomas J Mahoney Tr & Thomas J Mahoney 2024 Revocable Trust & Nancy Mahoney 2024 Revocable Trust, $925,000, 22 Pine Tree Dr Unit 17

Toll Ma Land III LP, Kerri Pinho Tr/ CKB Methuen Realty Trust, $905,096, 12 Wren Way Unit 155

Rock Hard Properties LLC, Old Ferry Road LLC, $829,000, 63 Old Ferry Rd

Toll MA Land III Limited Partnership, Roberta Page, $785,588, 10 Wren Wy Unit 156

Parth & Ritaben Patel, Katherine E O'Neil & Joshua P McKinnon & Devashri Parikh, $760,000, 14 Sadie Ln

Toll MA Land III LP, Patricia Page, $749,995, 8 Wren Wy Unit 157

Barbara Bryant & James L Pawlicki, Harjinder Singh & Kamalijit Kaur, $742,000, 28 West St

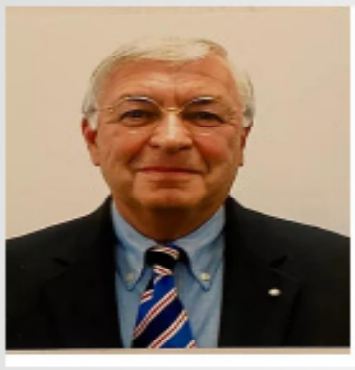
Shannon Desrosiers & Ryan Crowley/ Ryan J Crowley, Jose M Serra Lopez & Doralix A Florentino Minaya & Jose Manuel De Jesus Serra & Fior D Lopez De Serra, $715,000, 10-12 Odile St

Wendell Oliveira Nunes & Andrea C Santos Nunes, Karin Drake & Christian Ostebo & Kim Eng Mam, $701,000, 34 Washington St

Elie ElHachem & Jean Pierre ElHachem & Jane ElHachem, Julia Anne Friend &

NEXT PAGE

2024 TO-DO LIST ESTATE PLANNING... IT'S TIME



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NOTEBOOK: FROM 21

REAL ESTATE: From 24

John Charles Collins, $694,000, 9 Crestshire Ln

Miguel Cuevas Cabrera/Miguel Cuevas, Michany Rosado/Michany C Rosado, $689,000, 151-153 & 155-157 Tenney St

Joan Marie De Jesus, Carmen Sofia Gomez-Leon & Megan O Conyers, $675,000, 31 Albion St

Ronald L Peglow, Josefina Garcia Vasquez, $665,000, 106 Howe St

Taylor L Leger, Anglina Adames, $660,000, 527 Lowell St

Aleksandra & Vera Vashchuk, Nazaire Nzikoba & Esperance Uwimana, $650,000, 42 Tyler St

Pval Real Estate LLC, Sweet Daycare LLC, $638,200, 21 Jackson St

Wendy Y & Jose A Estrella Trs & AG & J Realty Trust, Marcel Acevedo & Maryelis Gomez & Jose Calderon, $610,000, 343 Hampshire Rd

Michael & Ashley Anderson/Ashley Kneeland, Michael John Lucas & Sarah Winifred Spear, $610,000, 15 Ashford St

Daniel & Julissa Jerez, Canh C Ho & Sarah Tran, $600,000, 15 Marc Ave

Lee Anne M Wyrwa, Jennifer Gomez & Osvaldo Calcano, $595,000, 55 Anderson Dr

Mary Ellen Moore, Robert Hatzikonstantis & Anna Kern, $591,000, 56 Baremeadow St

Salvatore J Piazza & Carmelina Piazza Life Est, Duc Le & Uyen Tran, $545,000, 15 Mary Lou St

Maria A Lopez & Marvin G Hercules, Samantha Kol & Nelson Perez, $530,000, 10 Field Ave

Krista C & Kelsey DiGloria/Kelsey Cartwrite, Richard Vazquez Jr, $530,000, 4 Booth Rd

Amy Brennan, Miguel A Bulux Lopez/ Miguel Bulux & Sonia M Colindres Mayorga, $520,000, 25 Madison St

Joseph S Maroun Jr & Christopher J Maroun & Matthew D Maroun & Melissa L Iannuccillo, Valerie Alba, $510,000, 20 Agnes Ter

John R Canavan, Pin Saengrat & Marivanh Saengrat, $489,000, 9 Arthur St

Joseph D & Kelly Ann DiTullio, Melkin M Reyes Perez & Yunairis Calderon Matos, $485,000, 49 Hillcrest Ave

Alan R Nault, Angel Manuel Guzman & Marie Anglica Guzman, $470,000, 80 Ames St

Linda Mele, John Ead, $449,000, 1 Riverview Blvd Unit 1-008

Jay Gelb, Kyle N Protasowicki, $409,000, 1 Riverview Blv Unit 8-107

Patrick A Matteo, Arelys A Gonzalez, $385,000, 21 Hampshire Rd Unit 213

Randall G Peglow & Ronald L Peglow & Susan G Chretien/Susan Grace Damico & Richard E Peglow, Ronald L Peglow, $375,000, 56 Myrtle St

Juan Gonzalez, Jerson C Espaillat Jr & Myrna J Percibal, $375,000, 45 Christopher Dr Unit 93

945 Riverside Drive Real Estate Trust of 2024 & Thomas E Perkins Tr, Arianna Lesslie & Blake Ward, $350,000, 945 Riverside Dr Unit 1C

Robert E & Catherine Plunkett, SR Flooring LLC, $350,000, 20 Aegan Dr Unit 9

William M Manzi III, Zhen Feng Li & Wen Ying Pan, $300,001, 36 Hampshire St

Joseph T Williams & Aimee M Sadoque, Allison J Madore, $270,000, 23 Pilgrim Cir Unit F

Jason Ye, Bachir Lib LLC, $195,000, 37 Jackson St

Starter Realty Management Inc, Rechdan 61 Mystic Street Methuen LLC, $175,000, 61 Mystic St Unit 13

Starter Realty Management Inc, Rechdan 61 Mystic Street Methuen LLC, $175,000, 61 Mystic St Unit 14

Starter Realty Management Inc, Rechdan 61 Mystic Street Methuen LLC, $175,000, 61 Mystic St Unit 19

Starter Realty Management Inc, Rechdan 61 Mystic Street Methuen LLC, $175,000, 61 Mystic St Unit 22

Sean P Fennell, Seda Chhav, $150,000, 30 Danbury Dr Unit 4

NORTH ANDOVER

Alan & Carol Sue LeBovidge, Feng Chen & Wenfang Wang, $1,450,000, 93 Bonny Ln

William A Sullivan III, Mary Latona & Alexander Hanscom, $1,325,000, 32 Fox Hill Rd

Steven D & Karen C Robbins, Casey A & Nicholas P Antonelli, $1,200,000, 20 Nutmeg Ln

Jeffrey D & Charlene A Hart, Jessica L Herbster & Paul F Frangakis, $966,000, 26 Easy St

Michael W & Ann M Connolly, Eric D & Sarah Moreschi, $960,000, 41 Johnson Cir

Daniel T Murphy & Sharon H Yen, Zoe Lee Baum Becker & Roberto Carlos Melendez Romero, $945,000, 57 Settlers Ridge Rd

Millpond Homeowners Association Inc, Zendko LLC, $900,000, 122 Millpond

Peter P Devlin & Arlene A Curran, Bryan E & Celina Eilene Sharkey, $869,900, 175 Salem St

Douglas Ahern, Colin Rowe & Julie A Issenberg, $805,000, 79 Moody St

Mauricio Yurrita & Emilia R MacDonnell, Julissa Flores, $750,000, 16-18 Saunders St

David Miller/David G Miller & Nancy B Starks-Cheney, Rahul Handoo & Alisha Sharma, $724,900, 2701 Tupelo Cir Unit 2701

Mary L Christensen & David J Christensen & Donna M Dec, Peter Murphy & Samantha Donovan, $705,000, 30 Glencrest Dr

Robert P Marchand Tr & Barbara A Grzybek Tr & Marchand-Grzybek Family Trust, Janet A Suleski, $705,000, 54 Ciderpress Wy

James M Quinlan & Daniel J Quinlan & Timothy R Quinlan, James Austin Quinlan & Megan Quinlan, $665,000, 34 Trinity Ct

Hooks K Johnston Jt Tr & Susan Y Johnston Tr & Johnston Realty Trust, William D & Janis M Stocks, $657,000, 35 Cochichewick Dr Unit 10

Star Ridge Properties LLC, JMT Holdings LLC, $580,000, 60 Ashland St

Foresight Investment Inc, Galina Feldman, $569,000, 69 Prospect St Unit 1

Donna M & Richard Corrigan, Kelly Burns, $530,000, 75 Millpond

Rosalia Coombe, Jennifer Noel Scully, $527,000, 61 Millpond

Eliel & Jaclyn Dasilva, Imad Marjia & Yasmin Hamdi, $480,000, 24 Kingston St Unit 24

Rachel Sandra Christensen, Mahmoud Raghib, $460,000, 127 Marblehead St Unit C

Anne Marie Leduc, Jaclyn Landry, $430,000, 156 Chestnut St.

Merrimack Valley Builders Inc, Trevor & Kimberly Phillips, $430k, 84 East Water St

Suk Hi Rivard, Jill & James Casaccio, $400,000, 31 Andrew Cir

Nadia M Eldakar, Timur Khasanov, $385,000, 148 Main St Unit B-332

Keith Lomas, Joanne F Lynch Tr & Shannon M Lynch Tr & Joanne F Lynch Revocable Trust, $360,000, 37 Kingston St Unit 105

John T & Lynn E McLoughlin, JCE Property Development LLC, $340,000, 335 Salem St

Charles M & Ashley Ludwig, Ashley Giardina & Esperanza Medrano, $338,000, 52 Fernview Ave Unit 52FV-12

Madeline Cincotta, Janelle Bruno, $335,000, 23 Fernview Ave unit 23-FV-2

Whirty Realty Trust & Susan M Whirty Maffei Tr & Robert Francis Whirty Tr & Maryanne & Robert F Whirty Irrevocable Trust, Zachary J Hachey, $330,000, 172 Chestnut St Unit 10

U S Bank Trust N A Tr, Jason Sabatino, $270,000, 13 Walker Rd Unit 1

Melinda Puleo Tr & Scorpio Realty Trust, Shawn K Puleo, $178,125, 110 Kingston St Unit 110

HERO: FROM PAGE 1

those very quiet and detailed guidelines I was provided by my grandfather so many years ago."

Eric elaborates on his grandparents, "There is a reason why my grandfathers' generation was deemed the greatest generation for a reason. Yes, what they did for their country overseas and how they stopped several leaders or dictators from around the world. It was their abilities to face and seek adversity and overcome it in a most basic of ways and the ability to pass this along to future generations to instill their success with what they do in their lives as well."

His grandfather's advice of not judging an American until you know their story, hit home with Eric, and guided him during his time in the US Marine Corp, as a Groveland Police Officer, and as a case manager for Clear Path for Veterans. Eric left the Marines as a Sargent, (E-5) with the MOS of 0331, machine gunner. He then served our Nation as a Groveland, Massachusetts Police Officer.

Following up on our April Valley Patriot story of Haverhill Veterans Service Officer, Jeff Hollett, we talked, focusing this article also, on meeting the five needs of our Nation's Veterans, housing, health care, employment, education, and fellowship. As a case manager for Clear Path for Veterans, Eric is working daily with fifty-three Veterans being treated by the Bedford, Massachusetts Veterans Hospital.

This writer encourages the readers of the Valley Patriot to visit the website of Clear Path for Veterans New England. The organization is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established in 2017 with a mission to create a safe, supportive, and respectful environment for Veterans to seamlessly integrate into their communities. In our Hollett article last month, we talked about meeting the five basic needs of Veterans. A tour of Clear Path for Veterans New England's website showcases programs as diverse as Yoga and Service Dogs, all designed to meet those needs.

Eric is very proud of Clear Path's use of non-traditional therapy when treating our Veterans. Veterans can enjoy and benefit from programs such as horseback riding, gardening, and wood working, as well as Tai Chi. Clear Path also offers music and many other non-traditional treatments and approaches. Eric went into detail about taking four sullen, quiet, solitary Veterans to Old Glory Millworks, for the company's free "Build a Flag Workshop for Veterans''. According to Eric, during the drive out to the shop at 25 N. Main Street Templeton, Massachusetts, none of the four Veterans spoke to each other or him. They spent the day working on a woodworking project at Old Glory Millworks, learning a craft, relaxing, and helping each other complete their individual projects.

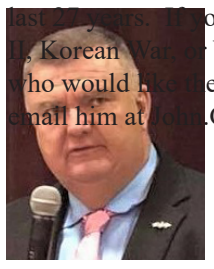
On the ride home, these same four Veterans were laughing, talking, reminiscing about their day in the woodworking shop, starting the day as strangers and ending the day as friends. One of Eric's concerns is, Veterans coming home and being trapped in "four walls." He is constantly trying to get the fifty-three Veterans in his care engaged with each other, family, employment, or the community at large. When asked if the Bedford VA Hospital still runs a 9-hole golf course, he proudly answered, "yes" and that two of the Veterans in his care are working on it!

Eric has taken this approach in his life whether with his professional careers, assisting friends in need, or being a member of his family and community. In his own words, Eric says "this has allowed me to view adversity and problem solve for those I can help. While it is rewarding to help others, it is so much more to hear of their successes they have accomplished no matter how big or how small. I am so very fortunate to have found a home at Clear Path and amazed by what they have done and what I have learned from so many of the staff there as well." Eric especially credits mentor and co-worker Jason Gilbert, who is his "answer man for all and any questions" for his success. US Marine Corps Veteran, Eric Ryan, leading by example, was the 2000th enrollee at VA Bedford, "Million Veteran Program (MVP), a program that contributes to research that can help fellow Veterans. "As Veterans, paying it forward and helping someone down the road - that's what it's all about," said Ryan.

We talked about water therapy being used to treat Veterans with PTSD, employment programs helping Veterans make the transition to civilian life, and programs for assisting Veterans run by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the American Legion, the American Veterans (AMVETS), and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). Eric and the staff of the Valley Patriot always encourages Veterans to contact and join one of these four organizations. Veterans in danger of being homeless are his number one priority, particularly Veterans with dependent children. One of his proudest moments at Clear Path was getting a Veteran with problems at work and home, into transitional housing within five days. US Marine, Police Officer, Veterans Advocate, Eric Ryan is a "Hero in our Midst"!

The Merrimack Valley American Legion Posts ask all World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans to call (603) 518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! Veterans of all eras are asked to go to the American Legion's Web site www.legion.org and join the American Legion. Our mission is working with Congress, Veterans, and the Community, preserving our Veteran's Benefits for future generations and serving all Veterans and their families.

John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the US Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last [illegible] years. If you know a World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War Veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com ◊



TV TALK with BILL CUSHING

“Sugar”

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

A mysterious private detective struggles with personal demons as he investigates the disappearance of a Hollywood producer’s beloved granddaughter. That is the story behind ‘Sugar,’ a stylish throwback to the film noir detectives of the past with a terrific lead performance by Colin Farrell and my recommendation for this month.

John Sugar lives in L.A., drives a vintage Corvette, and loves old movies. Right from the opening credits, with the moody music and voiceover, ‘Sugar’ resembles many classics of the genre, especially the stories featuring Raymond Chandler’s iconic hard-boiled Los Angeles PI, Philip Marlowe, or Dashiell Hammett’s Sam Spade.

Sugar doesn’t have the typical wisecracking secretary. Instead, he has Ruby (Kirby Howell-Baptiste), a British woman who lives in a gorgeous Silver Lake cottage and seems to be in charge of him in some way. Is she his manager? Handler? And if so, who does Ruby work for?

As the story unfolds, Sugar, who specializes in finding missing people, is summoned to the mansion of a wealthy old man who wants him to find his granddaughter Olivia. Sugar is supposed to be taking a break, but he can’t resist the call because the old man is Jonathan Siegel (James Cromwell, perfectly cast), a movie producer whose films are some of Sugar’s favorites.

As he attempts to uncover her mysterious disappearance, the private investigator begins unearthing family secrets that were never meant to be uncovered, propelling him and the Siegel family into a downward spiral. Along the way, Sugar finds a corpse in the trunk of a car, encounters a very scary gang leader, and meets Melanie (Amy Ryan), a former rock star and former member of the Siegel family.

The chemistry between Sugar and Melanie forms the heart of ‘Sugar’. Melanie has been sober but recently fell off the wagon, which may have some connection to Olivia’s disappearance and the death of another young woman. The questions keep piling up, but the way the mystery unfolds is smooth and masterfully executed.

Sugar’s outlook on the world is sweet and sad, he frets over all the dark things his work turns up and wishing everyone could act a little nicer. “I don’t like hurting people,” he says in the show’s very first scene. The fact that he has to resort to violence sometimes doesn’t make this any less true. Why he feels this way, and a lot more about John Sugar, becomes clearer at the end of episode 6 when a bombshell of a twist is revealed and shows us that ‘Sugar’ is much more than a detective show.

Farrell is the best and strongest asset of ‘Sugar.’ His portrayal of the detective just oozes cool. He’s able to exude his natural charisma while simultaneously being able to portray such an enigmatic character. Although the supporting cast is excellent and all turn in solid work, make no mistake, this is Farrell’s show.

There’s no word yet on a second season but hopefully Farrell will get to play this character for years to come and we’ll see more John Sugar.

‘Sugar’ is another show in a long line of interesting and quality content from AppleTV+ and is available to stream now.

If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion.◊

Many Voices!

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Greetings and God Bless every one of you in Jesus Mighty Name! Let us get right into it! There are many voices on Television, Radio, and The Internet, Social Media, and Streaming Platforms like YouTube, Blogs, and Podcast! All having someone expressing, I have got a word from the Lord for you! How am I supposed to know if what I am hearing, is really from the Lord?

Well, let us quiet the noise surrounding us and ask God what is it that He wants us to know about what we are Listening to. The Bible gives us a starting point which we can read in 1 John 4:1-3, “Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. 2 This is the way to find out if they have the Spirit of God: If a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ became a human being, that person has the Spirit of God. 3 If a prophet does not acknowledge Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist. You have heard that he is going to come into the world, and he is already here.” NLT.

I learned some time ago that after hearing a Word from an individual who says he or she has heard from God, and states that God told them something to tell me, and when I walk away and all my attention is on the speaker, then I do not put much trust in what they have said. I should always be walking away glorifying the name of Jesus Christ and not the speaker. Jesus said that after the Spirit of Truth has come, The Holy Spirit would glorify Him as it says in John 16:13-15, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.14 He will bring me glory by revealing to you whatever he receives from me. 15 All that the Father has is mine; this is what I mean when I say that the Spirit will reveal to you whatever he receives from me.” NLT.

Before going any further, I will briefly explain the How behind the What. God is Spirit and speaks to what He is, meaning that when God speaks to us, He does not speak to our flesh, our heads, He speaks to the spirit inside us, our born-again spirit. His Spirit bears witness with our spirit as it says in Romans 8:16, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,” NKJV. Once we are born again, we are re-connected. God the Holy Spirit speaks to the New Creation, the Inner man, our born-again spirit by a sense of knowing, (I call it a gut feeling), or Pictures, (the Bible refers to these as visions or dreams), or by Hearing. (Romans 10:17, “Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news — the Good News about Christ.” NLT.

This brings me back to our original question; how do we know if WHAT we just sensed, seen, or heard is from the Lord? I am in the process of learning, (by no means do I claim to be an expert in this), of asking these three questions upon receiving a word.

#1. Does what you just sensed, seen, or heard lign-up with Scripture and the Nature of God revealed in Scripture? (1Corinthians 13:1-8)

#2. Does what you just sensed, seen, or heard produce the Fruit of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, [patience] kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” NKJV.

#3. Knowing that All Truth has the Ability to set us Free, (John 8:32), does what you just sensed, seen, or heard result in releasing you? Not necessarily from a circumstance or suffering, but releasing you from the power that the circumstance has over you? Release from being controlled by suffering, and being able to maintain who you are in the present face of what is going on. For example, The Apostle Paul being in Prison, was set free sometimes and not at other times. (Read Acts 16:22-28). The Central Activity of Living in Freedom is Hearing from God!

To go along with asking these three questions, I am also learning that there are specific Indicators for hearing God’s Voice. It will bring you a sense of Peace and Assurance. It will Encourage and Strengthen you. It will align with Scripture and bring Glory to God. It will resonate with you (God will always speak to you first!) and motivate you to act. It will result in Transformation. Information changes thoughts, Revelation changes Beliefs! Let us remember, God’s Communication to you and me will have the Sound and Intonation of the most Loving Father we can imagine!

I think each of us should ask ourselves, do we believe that God is still speaking today? If for some reason you answered no, then you are simply being robbed! But if you answered yes, then may I humbly suggest you ask God something like what is written in Jeremiah 33:3, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” NKJV. Call Him and He will answer you!

Jesus Christ came to reconnect us to The Father! Something that we could not do for ourselves!

So, Call on Him and He will answer, expect it, wait for it, and He will answer you!!! You are SPECIAL to HIM!!! Remember, we are His Children!!!

And, speaking of children,
Happy Mother’s Day!!!
Peter Larocque
peterlarocque@hotmail.com ◊

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LAWRENCE, MA
978-291-0220 X1

valleypatriot.com